

Muslims AND INDIA'S FREEDOM MOVEMENT

B. K. AHLUWALIA
SHASHI AHLUWALIA

**MUSLIMS
AND
INDIA'S FREEDOM
MOVEMENT**

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by
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SHASHI AHLUWALIA



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Muslims and India's Freedom Movement

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To
Meenakshi, Shobhana and Rajesh

Preface

There has not been adequate realisation of the contribution of Muslim nationalists in the freedom struggle.

The reason is not far to seek. The communal frenzy which gripped the sub-continent after the Muslim League staked its all for a vivisection of India on the basis of religion threw a shadow of doubt on the entire Islamic community. The trauma caused by the partition left a trail of pain which made a balanced assessment of the role of Muslims in the national struggle difficult.

Now, after thirty-seven years of freedom the climate is ripe for a proper historical appraisal of the role of nationalist Muslims, like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Dr. Ansari. They refused to allow religion to vitiate the political attitude. They were convinced that religion was a private credo which should not intrude into human relationship, that all religions preach the oneness of man, that there is no more potent social force than secularism.

Maulana Azad lived true to his name. *Azadi* was dear to him—freedom from all bigotry and bias, freedom from communal passions and religious fanaticism. He stood shoulder to shoulder with freedom fighters. He rapped the Muslim League, again and again, for its narrow view of the situation. It was with deep anguish that he lived through partition. Later he worked with Jawaharlal Nehru in guiding the new educational system of free India.

Some Muslims like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan though not freedom fighters in the true sense of the term played tremendous role in the field of social and religious areas. They indirectly prepared the ground for healthy political consciousness. The institution founded by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan produced within a short span of time, great freedom fighters like Maulana

Mohammad Ali, Zakir Husain and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

The authors in this volume have tried to highlight the role played by these leaders and thus tried to prove that Muslim participation in freedom struggle had been quite vigorous.

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**B.K. AHLUWALIA
SHASHI AHLUWALIA**

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PART I

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

A Man of Luminous Intelligence

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

It has fallen to my lot often to refer in this House to the death of a colleague or some great man. I have to perform that duty, a sad duty, again today in regard to one who was with us a few days ago and who passed away rather suddenly, producing a sense of deep sorrow and grief not only to his colleagues in Parliament, but to innumerable people all over the country.

Now, it has become, if I may say so, almost a commonplace, when a prominent person passes away, to say that he is irreplaceable, that his passing away has created a void which cannot be filled. To some extent that is often true; yet, I believe that it is literally and absolutely true in regard to the passing away of Maulana Azad. I do not mean to say that no great man will be born in India; certainly not. We have had great men and we will have great men; but I do submit that that peculiar and special type of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else.

I need not refer to his many qualities which we all know—his deep learning, his scholarship and his great oratory. He was a great writer and he was great in many ways. But there are other scholars; there are other writers; there are other orators; but there was this combination in him of the greatness of the past with the greatness of the present. He represented and he always reminded me of what I have read in history about the great men of several hundred years ago, say, if I think of European history, the great men of the Renaissance, or in a later period, of the Encyclopaedists who preceded the

French Revolution, men of intellect, men of action. He reminds me also of what might be called the great qualities of olden days—the graciousness of them. There were many bad qualities, of course, in the old days, but there was a certain graciousness, a certain courtesy, a certain tolerance, a certain patience which is sadly to seek in the world today. There is little of graciousness in the world today, even though we may become more and more advanced in scientific and technical ways. Even though we may seek to reach the moon, we do it with a lack of tolerance, with a lack of some things which have made life worthwhile since life began. So, it was this strange and unique mixture of the good qualities of the past, the graciousness, the deep learning and toleration and an understanding of the urges of today that made Maulana Azad what he was.

Everyone knows that even in his early 'teens he was filled with the passion for freeing India and he turned towards ways even of violent revolution. And then he realized, of course, soon after, that that was not the way which would gain results.

He was a peculiar and a very special representative in a high degree of that great composite culture which has gradually grown in India. I do not mean to say that everybody has to be like Maulana Azad to represent that composite culture. There are many representatives of it in various parts of India; but, he, in his own venue, here in Delhi or in Bengal or Calcutta, where he spent the greater part of his life, represented this synthesis of various cultures which have come one after another to India, rivers that had flowed in and lost themselves in the ocean of Indian life, India's humanity, affecting them, changing them and being changed themselves by them.

So, he came to represent more specially the culture of India as affected by the culture of the nations of Western Asia, the Iranian culture, the Persian culture, the Arabic culture which affected India for thousands of years—especially Iran—as everyone knows. In that sense, I said that I can hardly conceive of any other person coming who can replace him because there was already a change in the age which produced him and that age is past. A few of us are just relics, who have

some faint idea of that age that is past.

I do not know if the generation that is growing up will even have any emotional realization of that age. We are functioning in a different way; we think in a different way; and a certain gap in mental appreciation and understanding separates us, separates the generations.

It is right that we change; I am not complaining. Change is essential lest we become rooted to some past habit which, even if it was good at some time, became, bad later. But, I cannot help expressing a certain feeling of regret that with the bad, the good of the past days is also swept away, and that good was something that was eminently represented by Maulana Azad.

There is one matter I should like to mention here, a curious error to the expression of which I have myself been guilty about Maulana Azad's life and education. Even this morning, the newspapers contained a Resolution of Government about Maulana Azad. The error is . . . that it is stated—as I have stated sometimes—that he went and studied at Al Azhar University. He did not do so. It is an extraordinary persistence of error of wide circulation. And, as I said, I myself thought so. Otherwise, I would have taken care to correct it in the Government Resolution which has appeared today. The fact is that he never studied at Al Azhar University. He went, of course, to Cairo; he visited it as a visitor, to see it; but he never studied there. He studied elsewhere. He studied in fact, chiefly in Calcutta, in the Arabic schools as well as other schools. But he spent a number of years in Arabia. He was born there and he visited Egypt as he visited other countries of Western Asia.

So, we mourn today the passing of a great man, a man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its core. I have used the word 'luminous'. I think perhaps that is the best word I can use about his mind—a luminous mind. When we miss and when we part with such a companion, friend, colleague, comrade, leader, teacher—call him what you will—there is inevitably a tremendous void created in our life and activities.

It is possible that the initial reaction may not be a full

realization of that void. The initial reaction is one of shock and sorrow. Gradually, as days pass, the void appears deeper and wider and it becomes more and more difficult to fill that place which was filled by a person who has passed away. But that is the way of the world and we have to face it. We have to face it not negatively but positively by devoting and dedicating ourselves to what he stood for and trying to carry on the good work which he and others who have left us—captains and generals of our peaceful forces who have worked for Independence and progress and the advancement of India, who have come and who have gone leaving their message behind. And so, I hope that though he may go, he will live and his message will live and illumine us as it did in the past.

Speech by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, in the Parliament on 24 February, 1958

An Outstanding Figure

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Maulana Sahib was an outstanding figure of great courage, fearlessness, integrity and passionate love for freedom. He has been a unique figure in our political life for nearly two generations. Even before he joined the Congress in 1920, he was a revolutionary. His political wisdom, patriotic fervour and sacrificial service were recognised early and he was made the President of the Indian National Congress in 1923, a position which he held for a number of years on different crucial occasions. His services to the country as a sagacious statesman, an ardent patriot, and a great intellectual are inestimable. He suffered for his convictions, but he never shrank from expressing his views. Among the great qualities of leadership he had, was this that he never shrank from expressing his views for fear of losing his popularity. A leader has to be firm. No man can be a leader if he does not risk unpopularity for his views. He who tries to please all ends by pleasing none.

Maulana Azad noticed the defects which made for subjection and struggled to the best of his ability to remove them. National dissensions have been a frequent cause of our repeated humiliation and subjection. He stood against them; he wanted to bring about the consolidation of our country. A devout Moslem, whose work on the Quran has become a classic, he always stood for national unity and communal harmony. He made no difference between Hindu and Moslem, Sikh and Christian. He felt that all those who were in this country belonged to one country. National spirit was the driving force of his life. He was an apostle of national unity and communal harmony, the lessons which we have to remember even now,

since there are forces which are still at work in this country to divide us from one another. Indian unity cannot be taken for granted. It has to be nourished with great care in these days of linguistic and regional dissensions. These differences should be used to enrich the unity of India.

While his profound humanism is well-known, he had a clear vision of what was right and what was wrong in public affairs. While he allowed compassion to sway his behaviour in personal relations, he never deviated from principles of justice so far as public affairs were concerned. He may forgive a man if he insults him personally, but he who does a national disservice has to be dealt with adequately. Compassion in personal relations and justice in public affairs has been his principle. If we neglect probity in administration, the stability of the Government and the stability of our social structure will be undermined. He was much too fond of the right to prefer the wrong or the expedient. All along, whenever questions of administrative integrity arose, he fought for preserving high standards in public administration. That is another lesson which we have to remember.

When once freedom was won, he again felt that we must use that freedom for promoting social welfare, cleanse this country of sickness, squalor, illiteracy, etc., and cleanse our minds of superstition, of obscurantism, of fanaticism. He stood for, what one may call the emancipated mind, the mind which is free from narrow prejudices of race or language, province or dialect, religion or caste. We had in Maulana Sahib the civilized mind.

Whenever I went to talk with him, he was full of quotations from Arabic and Persian. I do not know, but I am told that his command over these languages was unsurpassed and his speeches, which he gave in Urdu, were firm in their structure, dignified and polished in their diction, and cogent and pointed in their purpose.

Let us remember that he worked for the ideals of national unity, probity in administration and economic progress. These are the things which we have set before ourselves. The only way in which we can honour his memory is for us to adopt these ideals and question ourselves every day whether in our acts we are promoting national unity, we are promoting inte-

grity in administration, we are promoting economic and material progress. That is the way in which we can imbibe the lessons of his life.

Books have been his constant and unfailing companions. His conversation was full of quotations from the Arabic and Persian classics. He wrote an Introduction to *History and Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, which began with a Persian couplet which compares the Universe to an old manuscript of which the first and the last pages are lost. It is no longer possible to say how the book began nor do we know how it is likely to end.

*avyaktādinī bhūtāni vyaktamadyāni bhūrata
avyaktanidhanānyeva tatra ka parivedanā.*

To find out meaning of life and existence is the purpose of the philosophical quest. We may not succeed in finding it out, but the pursuit of this quest is its own reward. He ends the introduction with another Persian couplet which says that those who follow this path never tire because it is both the way and the destination. His life is an illustration of this. It was both the search and the attainment.

There is no doubt that we will not see the like of him again—a great man, a man of stately presence, indomitable courage and fearless behaviour, that is what the Maulana was.

Grand Monseigneur

M. CHALAPATHI RAU

Abul Kalam Azad was for a long time the grand monseigneur of our public life. He was grand in his passion for freedom, grand in his utterance, grand in his understanding, grand in his acceptance of life. He was a man of letters who easily became a man of affairs. In him religion and nationalism enriched each other. Belonging to the aristocracy of intellect, he easily identified himself with people's movements. He did not live in compartments; he discarded narrow scholasticism. While scorning delights he demonstrated the majesty of the human spirit. After prodigious feats of learning in his early years, he attained a serenity of temper and certitude of faith which could never be shaken. Seldom was so much learning turned into so much wisdom. He enriched Indian public life with elegance, passion, catholicity, and eloquence.

It is difficult to recall any adequate parallel to this prince among patriots, except from the richest periods in history. He could have been a contemporary of Erasmus, the greatest humanist of the Renaissance; he could have worked comfortably in the company of Martin Luther, the great leader of the Reformation; he could have matched his wisdom with the astuteness of the cardinal statesmen of Europe in the seventeenth century. In twentieth-century India he brought to Islam and to Indian nationalism the spirit of a new Renaissance, a new Reformation, and a political wisdom equal to the new needs. To Islam in India developing a narrowness bred by foreign influence, he brought a breadth of outlook from the austerities of Arabia and from the world's oldest university,

and he wrote and spoke like a prophet. He was a theologian who made of theology a broad, new, rich humanism. He was no grey eminence. He would not accept the dogma of ancient texts or the dogma of new protestantism. To the Koran he brought back a faith freed from cluttering commentary. Undeviatingly true to the purpose of his life, he fought the battle of sound learning and plain commonsense against ignorance, superstition, and obscurantism. He had no metaphysical inclinations and never lost his mental balance. Though learned in divinity, he proclaimed the rights of reason and exercised them. Indian nationalism received from him its equanimity of temper which helped it to remain true to its heritage. In religious matters, he was a great intermediary between scholasticism and modernism. Neither Calvinistic nor hedonistic, he contributed to the evolution of new values in life, particularly in the difficult times after freedom. Maulana Azad made a sustained contribution to secularism with imperious gestures of modernism.

Maulana Azad was second to none in intellect, in patriotism, and in understanding. He did not need to cultivate conviction; he breathed them. It was a tribute to the genius of Gandhi that a great prodigy of Islam threw himself into the national struggle under his leadership. Early, Maulana Azad gave the sensation of rationalism to the world of mullahs. As President in the most troubled phase of the history of the Congress, he spoke not only with faith but with clarity. In his oratory, argument predominated over resonant diction. To listen to a speech by him or to attend one of his press conferences was an education in public issues. For years the Congress Working Committee depended on his frank and balanced approach to problems. He was the oracle who spoke rarely but rightly. He was one of the generating forces of present-day progressivism. Nehru could not have had a better and truer guide and friend in the formative years of freedom, or the Indian state a better stabilising, balancing force. Maulana Azad had no shallow antipathies; he was for the utmost freedom of expression for all political forces. To the Muslims in India, he spoke with great foresight at Ramgarh, in 1940:

“Politically speaking, the word ‘minority’ does not mean

just a group that is numerically smaller and, therefore, entitled to special protection. It means a group that is so small in number and so lacking in other qualities that give strength that it has no confidence in its own capacity to protect itself from the much larger group that surrounds it....

"If this is the right test, let us apply it to the position of the Muslims in India. You will see at a glance a vast concourse, spreading out all over the country; they stand erect, and to imagine that they exist helplessly as a minority is to delude oneself."

He had his critics. His record as Education Minister has been variously assessed. He had a love for Urdu as for Persian, but he was not against Hindi. When challenged in Parliament, he burst out into a cascade of passion. Even his critics were impressed.

Maulana Azad did not think in terms of communities, religions, parties and groups. He believed in the fellowship of faiths and asserted the magnificence of the human mind.

Political Ideas of Maulana Azad

MOIN SHAKIR

A study of Maulana Azad's political ideas involves the analysis of his religious philosophy and the assessment of his role in the Indian politics. His religious philosophy played a vital rôle in shaping his political ideas and the Indian politics provided an opportunity to try their efficacy. It is to be noted that his interpretation of Islam is not properly accepted. During the Khilafat days Maulana Mohammed Ali was decidedly the more influential leader, afterwards he was characterized as the show boy of the Indian National Congress. The partition of the country was the end of his political dream. Still his religious as well as political ideas are more relevant in the subcontinent than of any other leader of the Muslim community.

Maulana Azad was an outstanding Muslim intellectual of modern India. The range of his mind was encyclopaedic and he was not only an embodiment of the comprehensive genius of the present age but also a unique synthesis of the East and the West. By training religious and by conviction rational and modern, he tried to reconcile religion with reason without injuring either. Here is seen the confluence of tradition and the forces of change. He served as a bridge between the new and the old worlds of thought. With him the distinction between old and new did not count. The old was his heritage and the new was as familiar as the old.

Early influences

In the shaping of Azad's mind his ancestry did play an

important role. He had a great admiration for certain fundamental values which he derived from his ancestors. What was dearer than anything else was truth. His ancestors never cared or wished for worldly wealth. He mentioned Maulana Jamaluddin with pride as one who refused to sign the Infallibility Decree of Akbar. His son, Shaikh Mohammed, did not hesitate to go against Jehangir and support Shaikh Ahmed Sirbindi. Quazi Sirajuddin, Maulana Munawwaruddin and Maulana Khairuddin also courageously fought against those forces which they thought "un-Islamic". Thus what Maulana Azad inherited from his ancestors was a legacy of orthodoxy and rigid adherence to the letter of the scriptures. Right from Maulana Jamaluddin to Maulana Khairuddin one observes a vigorous current to religious reaction. They betrayed lack of political insight and wisdom and failed to grasp the political implications of their orthodoxy or support their reactionary political role. He appreciated their erudition and their courage in defying political authority. They could utter truth in a downright manner before the kings with a courageous disregard of consequences.

The early education imparted to Azad under the rigid guidance of the father was of the traditional type. But his logical bent of mind, infinite vastness of knowledge and command over expression led him to discussions with notable theologians like Abdul Haq Haqqani and Maulana Abdullah Taunqi.

Ancestry

But Azad did not regard the merits of ancestry as the sole token of honour. He was a blind follower of his father. His restless mind was not satisfied with the orthodox religious approach. He was gifted with the faculty of original thinking and independent judgement. He expressed openly his repugnance to imitation (Taqleed) even if it be the imitation of his father. He was inspired by the rationalism of Motezzelized. Azad, unlike his father, did not consider Motezzelized cult as atheistic. The result of Azad's inclination to rationalism was his acceptance of Sir Syed's religious approach. He held that Sir Syed's efforts were aimed at an intellectual revolution in

the Muslim mind. Under the influence of Sir Syed, he realized that a person has no claims to be called "educated" in science, philosophy and literature." He also displayed distrust in the institution of the Ulema. Education in English, according to him, produced "a great mental crisis", and knowledge of modern science revolutionised faith. Many old concepts and values had become outmoded and superfluous. He thought that very old value need not be useful and relevant to the modern age. Azad, therefore, considered Sir Syed as a great Mujaddid. This phase, however, lasted for a very short period.

In the meantime he came into contact with the writings of Rasheed Raza of Egypt. Thereafter he began to deviate from Sir Syed. He found that the application of rationalism results first in scepticism and then leads to the negation of Politics. He believed that Sir Syed had no answer to questions like existence of God, attributes of God, eternity of soul, divine revelation, prophethood etc. These theological deviations became the basis of differences in political approach as well. He held that the political lead given to the Muslims by Sir Syed was mis-directed and a blunder. The Aligarh movement was confined to the problems of the Muslims of India, but Azad believed that no local or national movement could be beneficial to the Muslims. What was needed was a universal movement in the Muslim world. Strangely enough, Azad stated that the Muslims in India wasted forty years for the achievement of the object of education. But it will be unfair to Azad to infer that he rejected the views of Sir Syed in toto. Rejection of some of the elements of Sir Syed's thoughts did not connote a concession to orthodoxy either. The influence of Sir Syed's approach was abiding. Under Sir Syed's influence he strongly felt that there is no conflict between the Quran and science. The theory expounded by Darwin agrees with the spirit of the Quran. Moreover, Azad never denied that what is of lasting value in Sir Syed's thoughts, was an attempt to do away with imitation and vigorous support to *ijtihad*, Azad's religious and political philosophy was guided by these principles and he emphasised that this legacy of Sir Syed should never be lost sight of.

Differences on Aligarh movement

Azad had some basic differences over the political programme of the Aligarh movement, and he chose to support the policy of the Congress. This was already done by Shibli. Azad had met him for the first time in 1905, when he (Azad) was getting disillusioned with rational feature of Sir Syed's theology. Being the editor of *Al Nadva* he had the opportunity to work with Shibli. The futility of Sir Syed's political programme and the distrust in the Western educated class which formed the characteristic feature of Shibli's thought, tremendously influenced Azad. His own journal became a medium of dialogue with the masses and attained no mean success in popularising these ideas of Shibli. Azad himself thought that the Western educated people in India were just imitating the West and distorting the image of oriental culture, civilisation, ethics, learning as well as religion. He also wrote that the Western system had not contributed to learning, culture and civilisation. During this period, Azad was led inevitably to a reactionary and medieval concept of religion. He opposed even the idea of equal rights for women and of discarding the age-old practice of *purdah*.

Azad was also influenced and inspired by the teachings of Jamaluddin Afghani. An anti-imperialist by conviction, Jamaluddin Afghani could not reconcile himself with the pro-British attitude of Sir Syed. Besides, Sir Syed was concerned only with the problems of the Muslims in India, while Jamaluddin was free from such a narrow outlook. Shibli was also inclined towards the ideals of pan-Islamism. Thus Azad's opposition to the local Aligarh movement and the territorial nationalism was the natural outcome of the influence of Afghani and Shibli.

Meanwhile, Azad was also influenced by the writings of Mohammed Abduh. He borrowed from Mohd. Abduh the methods of the study of religion and its presentation in the modern age. Azad's approach to the essence of providence, the relationship of reason with religion and prophethood is more or less the same as that of Abduh. Curiously enough, Azad, who admired Mohammed Abduh and Rasheed Raza was unsparingly critical of the modernists in India. His view

was that they were lacking in Islamic learning, grop over figh, command over expression.

Early political programme

By rejecting the religious and the political tenets of the Ali-garh movement. Azad outlined his own programme of the Islamic politics through his journal, *Al Hilal*. *Al Hilal's* political mission revealed clearly the influence of Afghani and Shibli. It is also to be noted that before 1905, Azad was not hostile to the British Raj in the country. In 1902, he admitted that in the entire history of the country there had been no government which developed so much regard and respect for the liberties of the people, irrespective of their caste, creed and community. He also expressed his gratitude to the British Emperor for maintaining the independent existence of Islam and to the West for preserving Islamic-Arabic literature. In *Al Hilal* one finds a metamorphosis of the earlier ideas and the ideals of Azad. Azad held that Islam presents the sovereign remedy to all evils. The nature of prevailing situation and crises, according to Azad, is not very much different from that of the sixth century A.D. in which Islam originated. What is required is true adherence to Islam which provides the most comprehensive and perfect law to mankind. This view of Islam presents the "romantic" ideals of the Indian Muslims. It verily forms the basis of the idealistic and non-Islamic trends of Muslim politics. In Islam, according to Azad, religion and politics are the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

Azad's earlier life, political thought and programme are characterised by romanticism. The chief aim was the realisation of the Shariah and the integration of the Millat. Azad made a minute analysis of the stagnant condition of the Muslim society and the crises which it was facing and stimulated them for fresh action. He criticised the role of both Congress and the Muslim League. According to him, the partition of Bengal and its rendition had no religious significance. Azad's suggestion was that the community should aim at the establishment of the divine kingdom, sovereignty of God, maintenance of peace, good government and the supremacy of Truth.

Azad surveyed Indian politics in terms of religion. He accepted the conventional divisions of mankind made by Islam into believers and non-believers and described them as the people of paradise and the people of hell, the former the friends of God and the latter the friends of Devil. The Quran had promised that the friends of God will be rewarded. It also commanded them to resort to force for exterminating the non-believers. They should form a party. It would be a party of God. Their success is certain, as it is assured by God. Azad actually attempted to form such a party. He wanted to become the Imam of Muslims. He actually campaigned for that.

Rejection of romanticism

Azad attempted to develop a systematic theory of politics along the lines of romanticism. He was perhaps the only Muslim intellectual who sincerely applied his theory to the existing problems. He wanted to give radical and comprehensive reorientation to the existing politics on intellectual plane.

After the World War I Azad began to doubt the efficacy of his romantic scheme. This realisation was destined to affect his political outlook. The factors which revolutionised his outlook were many and varied. The changes taking place inside and outside the country turned him into an uncompromising anti-imperialist. He objectively studied the developments in the Islamic countries like Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey and came to the conclusion that nationalism and Islam are not antagonistic. But in India the Muslims were in minority. It called for a realistic and non-romantic approach. He believed that there were safeguards for the survival of the Muslim culture and there could be no harm in Muslims joining the Indian National Congress. It would not amount to an un-Islamic act. This conclusion marked the end of the Utopian and sentimental romanticism and formed the preamble for the union of diverse intellectual and religious forces in the country for a combined fight for national freedom.

Within the country, Azad was convinced on the basis of the attitude of the British government towards the liberties of the people that an imperialist government was invariably anti-demo-

cratic. The rendition of Bengal, the Kanpur mosque incident, the Jalianwala Bagh tragedy on the one hand and the anti-Muslim foreign policy of the British on the other, constrained Azad to join the Congress which stood for the establishment of justice, liberty and equality for one and all in the country. Besides, the end of the Khilafat movement was practically the end of the romantic phase of the Muslim leadership. It revealed to Azad the futility of spiritualised politics and of pan-Islamism, as an instrument for the liberation of India. The abolition of the institution of Khilafat shocked Mohammad Ali and drove him to nationalism; Iqbal did the same. But it brought Azad closer to Indian nationalism. The Indian nationalism as it was conceived by Azad was neither Hindu nor Islamic, it was secular and was directed towards a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures. This made him an advocate of Islam in the liberal, and progressive sense. He no more remained anti-west.

Here also it should be noted that unlike Sir Syed, Azad's approach to the West was creative. He wanted to achieve a creative unity and a synthesis of the East and the West. Azad denied emphatically that there was any necessary opposition between faith and reason and between religion and the spirit of the Western civilisation.

Azad's philosophy of religion was rational. He regarded the reasoning faculty in man as the noblest of his faculties. Reason is the driving force which leads to "an endless vista of progress". As K.G. Saiyidian says Azad is a rationalist but his rationalism does not clash with his belief in religion and rather draws strength and inspirations from it. Azad held that religion would never lose its importance in the scheme of human life as it is essential for the development and satisfaction of human spirit. Unlike philosophy and science, religion supplies faith to man. This shows that his view of Islam was flexible, liberal, tolerant and "humanitarian".

There are two aspects to Azad's concept of nationalism. One is his attitude towards the British Raj and the other his attitude towards his countrymen. Owing to the influence of Sir Syed, Azad was initially not anti-British, but a supporter of the British Government. Even upto 1905, there was no change in his stand. He advocated to his fellow Muslims the need for

aloofness from active politics and the steady pursuit of a peaceful way of life.

The second phase of his career began with disillusionment with the British regime leading to anti-imperialism. He realised that the Britishers were out to suppress all the movements for liberation in the Muslim countries, and that their policy would be no different in India. Azad evolved his own strategy to destroy the fabric of imperialism. The Muslims should be organised as one body with the Quran as their guide to conduct. They should become true or ideal Muslims and should form a party of God with the battle cry of *Jihad*. Such a party would be able to liberate the Muslims from the tyranny of British imperialism. But should the Muslims make common cause with the Hindus, who are aspiring for the liberation of the country? Azad's view was that they should not join any non-Muslim organisation, whatever its objects may be. They should follow Quran alone and should neither yield to the British nor to Hindus; to follow the Hindu would be "disgraceful". Such were the ideas of Azad in his early political career when he was yet to reckon with the new social forces which had emerged within the Indian society. Azad was still under the spell of pan-Islamism and was not prepared to identify himself with the Indian conditions or to recognise the territorial basis and claims of nationalism.

The third phase in the evolution of Azad's thought was the acceptance of Indian nationalism as a reality. This was due to the recognition of the unalterable facts of Indian politics, the rise and growth of Indian nationalism and of nationalism in the Middle East. In India a reassessment of the Muslim problem was imperative. To many of the Muslim intellectuals the situation was challenging and provoked different types of response, pan-Islamism of Maulana Mohd. Ali, Islamic nationalism of Iqbal, and the two-nation theory of the Muslim League. But Azad's approach to religion gave a distinctive shape to his political ideas. The principal of tolerance and brotherhood, and a long history of the growth of composite culture had forged unity between Hindus and Muslims against the alien rule. He saw the unity that asserted itself against the rich background of diversity in the country. It was at this stage that Azad came into contact with Gandhi.

The growth and development of Indian nationalism was not always coherent or consistent. The moderates and the extremists formed the main rival forces up to the advent of Gandhi in Indian politics. The confluence of religion and politics under the extremists succeeded in broadcasting the base of the nationalist movement and giving it a mass appeal. Religion and nationalism became almost convertible terms in the speeches and the writings of Sri Aurobindo and Tilak. Azad being orthodox, should have joined the extremists. But he refrained from doing so. He was aware of the failure of Maulana Mohd. Ali's mission. Gandhi was one half a liberal and the other half an extremist. C.R. Dass, Motilal Nehru etc. represented progressive and liberal nationalism. Azad was alive to the hard reality that militant nationalism would lead to religious obscurantism and mysticism in politics and weaken the secular character of the political movement. Azad had come out of the shell of religiosity by abandoning his romanticism. He could clearly comprehend that politics and religion had combined to turn the docile nationalism of the liberals into the militant nationalism of the radical wing.

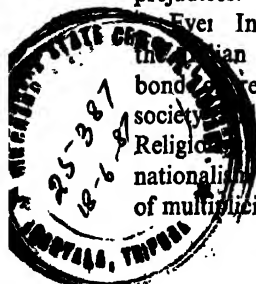
Indian nationalism as envisaged by Azad was, however, democratic and secular. In this respect there is a similarity between the attitude of Azad and C. R. Dass. Indian nationalism, according to C. R. Das, was a process through which a nation expressed itself and finds itself, not in isolation from other nations, not in opposition to other nations but as a part of a great scheme by which in seeking its own way, expression and therefore its own identity, it materially assists the self-expression and self-realization of other nations as well, diversity is as real as unity'. Azad also believed that nationalism is the goal and the struggle for independence or self-government, and an equal and respectable position in the society of nations. The spirit of Indian nationalism was not created, as Craddock thought, by the development of transport and communications; but by imperialist exploitation and the suffering of the Indian people. It is not parochial and inward looking. C. R. Das and Gandhiji had clearly enunciated the broad and healthy character of Indian Nationalism. Azad never had any misgiving about the veracity and efficacy of his views of nationalism. He forcefully advocated

that nationalism would not kill the spirit of Islamic brotherhood but would rather enrich and strengthen it. Khuda Baksh and other liberals had already arrived at the same conclusion. To Khuda Baksh "this nationalism of today does not supersede—much less annihilate—that spiritual brotherhood of Islam which includes the entire Islamic fraternity in its large and enlarging embrace. It does not weaken Islam. It strengthens it within its own geographical limits. Each nation may work out its own destiny. But it will never forget that beyond the national limit there is a brotherhood of Islam."

Azad believed that nationalism was capable of being a progressive force if it was liberated from religious orthodoxy and narrow-mindedness. Azad held that narrow mindedness is a "disease" in politics under the guise of nationalism. Nationalism was for the liberation of subject peoples against autocratic regimes, but it was necessary, he believed, to guard against nationalism becoming a hindrance to world unity and peace: The future of mankind would be dark indeed, if the force of nationalism was not subdued to the larger interests of mankind.

Azad's faith in nationalism, as Gandhi described it, was as robust as his faith in Islam". Azad's interpretation of Islam made a compromise with nationalism. He was as devoted to his "religion as he was to the ideal of the liberation and independence of his country. Azad made it clear that the Prophet of Islam proclaimed the message of monotheism and announced his peophethood. The Prophet used to pray "O God I bear witness that all people are brothers to one another. Differences they might have created amongst themselves, but you have united them together with a single bond of humanity". Thus Islam fosters nationalism avoiding communal and racial prejudices.

Every Indian Muslim, according to Azad, is a member of the Indian nation and could not by virtue of the common bond of religion, separate himself from the larger Indian society and claim the status of independent nationhood. Religion at the core as he was, Azad would not countenance nationalism based on religion, especially in the Indian context of multiplicity, as it would be a force for division, rather than



unity in the wider sense. Even Gibb reflects that strict adherence to the teaching of Islam would lead to conflict with the secular character of the state. But Azad felt that the Muslim minority cannot and should not brand Indian nationalism as un-Islamic, for it embodies the broad vision of Islam. Nationalism in India was impossible of realization without Hindu-Muslim unity. Azad stressed unity so much that he considered it dearer than the freedom of the country itself. Azad did not deny differences—so-called religious and other differences—between the Hindus and Muslims. As Nehru had observed “lesser men have sometimes found conflict in the rich variety of Indian life. He (Azad) has been big enough not only to see the essential unity behind all that diversity, but also to realize that only in this unity can he hope for India as a whole and for those great and varied currents of national life which course through her veins.” Therefore, outer [and external form of religion was not of any substantial value for Azad. Everything has to be subordinated to the interest of communal harmony. Azad laid great emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity, which he regarded as a legacy of our long history. After the loss of political power the Muslims have betrayed lack of strength and confidence while the Hindus have lost their largeness of mind and heart. This has been a great impediment to the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Azad, like C. R. Das, never adopted the communal approach for the solution of political and economic problems. He observed that “in future constitution determined by Indian representatives, the Hindus and Muslims will have to think of the position and interest not as a Hindu or Mussalman; it will be nothing worth unless it reflects equality of opportunity and economic freedom for all.” He, therefore, wanted that a concerted effort should be made in this direction. C. R. Das’ Pact of Bengal, for which Azad had great admiration is an example in point. He was always optimistic and felt that the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims would never become so grave as to lead to mutual warfare and bloodshed. They are to be resolved in a spirit of compromise and toleration. In India “every kind of faith, every kind of culture, every mode of living was allowed to flourish and find its own salvation.” The question of Indian first or Muslim

first was irrelevant for him. "I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete," he observed in 1940. Azad believed that the interplay of the Muslim and Hindu culture has given birth to what can be described as a composite and common culture.

"Eleven hundred years of common history", said Azad, "have enriched India with our common achievements. Our languages, our literature, our culture, our art, our manners and customs, the innumerable happenings of our daily life, every thing bears the stamp of our joint endeavour. There is indeed no aspect of our life which had escaped this stamp, this joint wealth is the heritage of our common nationality and we do not want to leave it and go back to the time when this joint life had not begun. If there are any Hindus amongst us who desire to bring back the Hindu life of a thousand years ago and more, they dream and most dreams are vain fantasies. So also if there are any Muslims who wish to revive their past civilization and culture which was brought a thousand years ago from Iran and Central Asia, they dream also and sooner they wake up the better. These are unnatural fancies which cannot take root in the soil of reality. I am one of those who believe that revival may be necessary in a religion, but in social matters it is the denial of progress." This very lucidly underlines Azad's broad view of nationalism and his firm faith in it.

In the fourth decade of this century these views were vehemently criticised by those who had no faith in composite culture. Azad was not very particularly occupied with problems like representation or recruitment to public services, though he was deeply concerned with the welfare of the Muslim community. He shared with R. Das the view that the Muslim problem is necessarily of economic character. He thought that unless the Muslims "were given the necessary assurances for their economic future, they could not be expected to join the Congress whole-heartedly" Azad said about C. R. Dass "I am convinced that if he had not died a premature death, he would have created a new atmosphere in the country." When the followers of C. R. Das repudiated the assurance,

Azad said, "the result was that the Muslims of Bengal moved away from the Congress and the first seeds of partition were sown." He, therefore, asserted that both the communities should have a common objective—freedom of the country. "The Muslims should join the Congress because the prophet did the same thing when he had to overcome Abu Sufian."

Azad was opposed to the partition of the country not only on political and cultural but also on religious grounds. He held that the scheme of Pakistan is "harmful not only for India as a whole, but also for Muslims in particular, and in fact, it creates more problems than it solves." It was, he felt, against the spirit of Islam, for it lays stress on division more than on unity and synthesis. The prophet had also said "God has made one whole world a mosque." Azad argued that the Muslims are a minority of 90 million people, who are in quality and quantity a sufficiently important element in Indian life to influence decisively all questions of administration and policy." This should also be emphasised that Azad's political ideas were in complete harmony with his philosophy of religion.

From the foregoing discussion it would be evident that Azad's programme of nationalism was composed of two parts, the overthrow of the British Raj and the achievement of the unity of all the people. All the people of India must have to the country. The question of the country had been a "subject of controversy and a major source of division between the liberals and the extremists since the closing decades of 19th century Azad would not agree with the liberals, (like Sir Syed among the Muslims) that the British connection with India was providential. Azad was also not very much interested like liberals in the issue of social reforms. But like the liberals he emphasised the need to follow constitutional methods though he would not rule out extremism altogether. If constitutional methods were to prove ineffective and fail to bring about the desired end, the people might justifiably resort to violent resistance. Azad had also to work with Gandhiji whose philosophy, like his own, was partly liberal and partly extremist. But he had differences with Gandhiji because he believed that the means should be appropriate and effective, not necessarily non-violent. In

this matter Azad was guided by the teachings of Islam.

Azad believed that Islam does not sanction war unless it became inevitable. War and Islam are contradictory and are poles apart. Islam has a message of peace for mankind. Islam preaches *Jehad* not war as the means for the establishment of permanent peace. *Jehad* does not necessarily imply warfare but Katharsis, quietness and patience. He also quotes many verses from the Quran which indicate that the essence of *Jehad* is patience, determination and sacrifice. The purpose of *Jehad*, when it implies warfare, is not the accumulation of wealth or territorial expansionism but to oppose injustice, war and tyranny. He knew too that consequences of war are not only cruel but disastrous. It has adverse effects on morality. In wars the distinctions of ethics disappear and spying becomes an art. Kind heartedness ceases to be a virtue and all other normal virtues lose their value and utility.

Azad, no doubt, supported the Khilafat movement. For him it was not an entirely religious issue. He said that it was a movement for the freedom of the country, which could inspire Muslims to fight against the alien rulers and unite them with their countrymen. It had awakened an awareness of India's problems among the people of the country. Islam does not permit slavery. Faith in Islam and love of freedom are synonymous. Thus, the Khilafat movement meant liberation of the country and the establishment of the system of *Shariat*. Moreover, support and participation in the Khilafat movement not only exposed the character of British Government but made Azad think of the propriety of the methods employed by the liberals. He observed : "I was of the opinion that these methods—begging, petitioning, waiting in deputation and so on could not be of much avail. We had to try to find some means of exerting direct pressure. But most people fought shy of this line of thinking." Azad, however, could not suggest hostility towards the British, but drafted a plan of non-violent non-cooperation. It was characterized by conviction of unity, righteous action, patience, organization and the spirit of sacrifice for the cause of freedom.

This approach of Azad brought him very close to Gandhi's line of thinking. But although Gandhiji was to become sole

exponent and practitioner of non-cooperation, the idea did not originate with him. Azad had already come to understand the usefulness of such a programme. "I had myself suggested a similar programme in some articles in *Al-Hilal*," said Azad. Hiren Mukherji also holds that Azad's role in the formation of that policy was decisive. "Four months before the Congress did so, the All India Khilafat Committee in 1920 adopted Gandhiji's non-cooperation programme in the formulation of which Maulana Azad was perhaps no less responsible than Gandhiji himself." Azad, unlike Gandhiji, regarded non-violence as a policy and not as a creed. He maintained that war is permissible to maintain freedom of religion and conscience. If tyranny can be eradicated by war, then war is justified. Azad admitted: "For me non-violence was a matter of policy not of creed. My view was that Indians had the right to take the sword if they had no other alternative." Though Azad adopted non-violence as a matter of policy only, he gave his sincere and unstinted support to Gandhi and became his close and trusted associate and a prominent leader of the Indian National Congress. "Congress must place greater emphasis on the freedom of India than on non-violence as a creed," Azad asserted. On the question of support to the British Government during the II World War, Azad wrote, "the issue was one of pacifism and not of India's freedom. I declared openly that Indian National Congress was not a pacifist organization but one for achieving India's freedom. To my mind the issue raised by Gandhiji was irrelevant." Gandhiji was of the opinion that war should not be supported "even if such participation meant the achievement of India's freedom."

Gandhi was a convinced pacifist and the logic of facts would hardly persuade him to modify his position. He was opposed to the Cripps proposals more on account of his aversion to war than his objection to the proposals as such. Azad's mind was not certainly governed by such a consideration. On many questions like settlement with the Government, on the issue of boycotting the Prince of Wales at Calcutta, holding of the Round Table Conference, calling off the non-cooperation movement and support to the Japanese vis-a-vis the British during the II World War, Azad openly expressed disagreement with

Gandhiji. When the non-cooperation movement was called off, both C.R. Das and Azad felt the need of an alternative programme. Had such a programme been formulated, it is conceivable that Azad might have supported it whole-heartedly and challenged Gandhiji's leadership. But because of the untimely death of C.R. Das and also because of the subsequent emergence of the aggressive League leadership, Azad could leave neither Gandhiji nor the Congress.

One of the reasons for Azad's unbreakable association with the Indian National Congress was his aversion to communal politics. He never approved of communalism either of the minority or of the majority. Hence his loyalty to the progressive sections of the Congress. His reaction to B. G. Kher's chief ministership is a case in point. Azad thus was secular and progressive in his views and was essentially a liberal though he was not halting and incurably moderate like the liberal's faith as well as a readiness for action. Azad could discover enough common ground between himself and Gandhi.

Azad had been a consistent and unflinching democrat. During the *Al-Hilal* phase of his politics he advocated democracy. When he abandoned romanticism his faith in democracy was not shaken. But during these periods he preached two distinct views on democracy. During the earlier phase, Azad did not regard democracy as a way of life. It was accorded a subordinate status in the Islamic scheme of life. It was a period when he considered Islam as the only one true and perfect religion. He derived all his ideas from the Quran and Hadith. He regarded the Prophet of Islam as the personification of all values beneficial to mankind. Azad insisted that the theory and practice of Islam were both against kingship, and the authority of one person. Liberals like Ameer Ali and Khuda Baksh had already argued on the same lines. "Foreign to the Arabs was the idea of hereditary kingship, or of divine concentration, or of sacred confirmation of the royal authority such as prevailed among the theoretically minded Hebrews. Among the Arabs the prince owned his authority to a general election, the only source of authority which they recognise" says Khuda Baksh. Azad too advanced the same thesis. But his stress was more on the theory of Islam rather than the practices of the caliphs. Azad also held that unity and sovereignty of God and the estab-

lishment of the supremacy of a righteous order are the real elements of democracy. Unity of God is a vital principle of democracy because Dualism of God is "insulting to human intelligence and a negation of human dignity". Azad believed that unity of God implied the sovereignty of Islam and the Islam aims at the abolition of the sovereignty of man. It is *Shirk Fissafath*. Only God is supreme and is above everything. "Islamic democracy" is subordinate to spiritual authority. It does not admit of expediency but enjoins definite attachment to righteousness and ethical values.

He held that democracy was a form of Government based not on the force but on the will of the people, characterised by tolerance, equality and liberty. Azad believed that liberty is essential for the development of the personality of the individual in every society. Absence of liberty results in slavery which is contrary to the teachings of Islam. He was also aware of the dangers of unrestricted liberty but he believed that the cure for the mistake of liberty lay in liberty itself. The "argument for creating a favourable atmosphere and certain preconditions for liberty is absurd", said Azad. Islam was essentially a liberalizing force. It freed man from the shackles of customs and the tyranny of earthly powers. It does not recognise any aristocracy or bureaucracy. It came to restore the lost freedom of humanity, the freedom which has been confiscated by kings, foreign governments, selfish religious leaders and powerful elements of society. The autocrats thought that might was right: but Islam proclaimed from its very birth that might was not right". It is my belief, stated Azad, that liberty is the natural and God given right of man. No man or bureaucracy consisting of men has got right to make the servants of God its own slaves. However attractive be the euphemism invented for subjugation and slavery, still slavery is slavery, and it is opposed to the will and cannons of God.

It should be emphasised that to Azad neither Islam nor liberty was an abstract concept. Both demand faith and action. He, therefore, supported the movement for the freedom of the country. That was why he championed the cause of the Khilafat, that is also the reason why he joined the Indian National Congress. He always advised the countrymen to strive for the freedom of the country and to give up scepticism and

inaction. He reminded fellow Muslims how their ancestors fought for liberty. The Khilafat movement had certainly a religious appeal. But Azad's view was that "the presence of the Islamic Caliph is not antagonistic to national freedom, and democracy". Thus, Azad had no hesitation or reservation in supporting any movement against the Government. Even in 1912 he said "We believe that it is the will of God that the nations and countries should be free to govern themselves."

Azad pointed out that Islam recognises the value of equality. Islam "swept off racial and national distinctions and showed the world at large that all human beings held an equal rank and all possessed equal rights. It proclaimed that excellence did not lie in race, nationality or colour. It was only righteous action that counted and the noblest among men was he who did his work most righteously". The Islamic conception of equality is thus not a mechanical but spiritual conception. Azad was also of the opinion that Islamic equality extended over the whole of society, without any restriction or exclusiveness. The sovereignty of the Prophet of Islam and of the Caliph was a perfected conception of democratic equality and it only could take the shape of the whole nation's free will, unity, suffrage and elections. This is the reason why the sovereign or president of a republic is like a designated Caliph. Khilafat literally means nothing more or less than representation..." It gives full rights to women and puts them on par with men. Azad substantiated it by quoting verse from the Quran (2,228). When however the Quran said that in certain respects man is superior to woman it was in the manner of emphasising the principle of division of labour. Azad therefore, held that the message of Islam is superior to that of the West. The "Western system does not provide real equality. It stands for taking away political power from the hands of the king. There is no social and economic equality. The Islamic way of life is full of instances of political and economic equality. The political life of the Prophet is also a case in point".

MEANS AND ENDS

The problem of means and ends was also considered by

Azad as part of his consideration of the concept of democracy. Azad discussed the problem for he was well aware of the continuous conflict between the individual and society. He did not effect some improvements in their economic status, proper training and refinement of emotion", an "element of the instruction is universal ethics and tolerance, mutual appreciation and universal principles of right conduct". In his broad spirit of synthesis Azad could even reconcile the seemingly opposed concepts of aristocracy and democracy. He argued that an aristocracy of merit and talent may not supplant democracy but may enrich it with the richness and grace of cultivated minority. Aristocracy may serve democracy by supplying the cultural deficiencies of a broadbased power structure. Democracy is not opposed to aristocracy if the latter serves "as an adjunct to democracy and seeks to fulfil its purposes". According to Azad aristocracy "develops" a width of vision and far-reaching imagination", and thus enriches democracy.

Convinced by the utility and the necessity of democracy, Azad made a conscious effort to determine the type of democracy which would suit the Indian environment. The traditions built up by the British rulers and the prevailing communal situation in India posed baffling problems to the freedom struggle. Azad was convinced that the contribution made by the British people in India has enriched the Indian policy. The basis of British administration which has been an instrument in unifying the country, should be retained. Moreover, India is a country where different languages are spoken and different religions are professed. Unlike America the principle of cultural and social development in India is not of diversity without sufficient unity but diversified unity.

Azad made a plea for the establishment of parliamentary government in India. "The National Government must be a cabinet government". Azad never discussed on an academic plane the merits and demerits of the parliamentary and the presidential systems. He held that the Indian situation demands a parliamentary executive. Azad stood for federalism too. He regarded it as a constitutional device to solve the communal problem in India. He regarded the "Muslim Problem" problem of a minority. This could be solved by adopting a federation where the centre would be weak and the constituent units

would enjoy greater autonomy. Under such an arrangement there would be no question of the domination of the majority community over the minorities. Federalism would also save the country from partition. Azad pointed out that the Muslims were concentrated in some scattered areas in the country. So the demand for Pakistan loses all force. As a Muslim, I for one am not prepared for a moment to give up my right that the whole of India is my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. To me it seems a sure sign of cowardice to give up what is my patrimony and would content myself with a mere fragment of it", declared Azad. When Azad suggested that to the Cabinet Mission, Lord Pethick Lawrance said, "You are in fact suggesting a new solution of the communal problem". Azad believed that the future Indian policy should be founded on the philosophy of federal-parliamentary democracy. Any alternative to such a scheme would be disastrous to India. Partition of the country would then become a fact. After partition Azad visualised that the minorities will "awaken and discover that they have become aliens and foreigners overnight...they will be left to the mercies of what would become an unadulterated Hindu Raj".

It should be made clear that Azad is perhaps the only theologian and politician who did not depict an ideal state. After the abandonment of the politics of romanticism Azad always advocated a progressive and genuine democracy. He thought that such a system would compose economic differences in a modern spirit. "Differences will no doubt persist. But they will be economic, not communal; opposition among political parties will continue, but they will be based not on religion but on economic and political issues. Class and not community will be the basis of future alignments, and politics will be shaped accordingly", said Azad.

As far as the cultural problem was concerned Azad believed that if a genuine democracy came into being it would present no great difficulties. The culture and the cultural rights of the minorities would be protected and safeguarded. This was described in a beautiful manner by Lala Lajpat Rai when he said: "What we aim at is not the merging or absorption of one into the other, but the integration of all into one whole, without in any way injuring or loosening each group individually...this

involves the separate existence of each religious community, with the fullest possible religious and communal freedom, each of them contributing its best to the constitution, prosperity of one National whole". Azad believed that the Indian polity after independence would be democratic and transcend communal considerations. But would the differences be resolved in a democratic order? Is socialism or Communism to be adopted as the goal? He found no conflict between democracy and socialism. Azad certainly belonged to the bourgeoisie class. But his view was that democracy is not just "political reflection of bourgeois society". To him democratic and national government signified the same thing. He supported socialism as, in his opinion, it fulfilled the requisites of democracy.

During the *Al-Hilal* phase he had said Islam and socialism are poles apart as Islam does not accept economic equality and opposed the abolition of the propertied classes. Afterwards he gave up this stand and pointed out the similarities between socialism and Islam. Both the systems disapprove of the concentration of means of production and exchange of wealth. Concentration of wealth should be prevented and private property may be abolished in the national interest. This is a question of policy and is wholly unconnected with religion. Azad believed that progressive democracy could control the economy of the nation without being bound by *laissez faire* philosophy. It cannot rely on big business for solving the economic problems of the nation. If "the rich people give alms or such associations to help the poor are formed the national economic problems will not be solved. In Britain and America no fund could prevent the poverty of the middle and lower classes. The solution is that a part of the entire income of the nation, by legislation, should be earmarked for the welfare of the poor people in the society". Azad, however, did not accept socialism minus democracy for his passion for democracy was primary. But the inadequacies of democracy constrained him to support socialism which is complimentary and not repugnant to the spirit of democracy.

Azad's conception of the philosophy of democratic socialism led to a broadening of his moral ideas. These are not connected with any exclusive creed but are commonly acceptable. Therefore, there should not be any objection to introducing

such moral or religious instruction in the government schools. This was core of what he advocated after becoming the education minister of free India. He complained that private religious institutions were not broadening the outlook and inculcating the spirit of toleration and goodwill, because "we are surrounded by over-religiosity. Our present difficulties, unlike those of Europe are not the creation of the materialist zealots, but of religious fanatics. If we want to overcome them, the solution lies not in rejecting religious instruction in elementary stages but imparting sound and healthy religious education under our direct supervision". Azad thought it necessary to strengthen democracy at all costs. He regarded the synthesis of religion, democracy and socialism as a universal necessity.

The internationalism of Azad is neither Islamism nor the worldwide unity of the working class. What is basic of Azad's internationalism is Man and his Thought. "Man all over the world had adopted common methods of reasoning and thought. The human reason is one and identical. Human feelings are largely similar. The human will operates more or less in a similar manner in similar situations everywhere. It is therefore natural that the human way of looking at himself and the world is largely common in different parts of the world". He thought that such a type of internationalism can be achieved by the right teaching of geography and history. Geography should be taught in a manner helpful to fostering of a world outlook. History should be made the medium for the achievement of the unity of mankind. In this context Azad believed that Islam could play a useful role. It would be able to maintain a balance between the extreme opposites of "the anarchy of European Nationalism" and "regimentation of Russian Communalism". He was aware of the fact that "Islam possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and co-operation. Islam had still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition". Islam will become a potent instrument of internationalism. Thus Islam is an effort of man to know the "Secrets of the Universe" as well as of the "self".

Azad is regarded as the greatest leader of the "nationalist Muslims". Their attitude is generally described as progressive

since it was in line with the spirit and policy of the Indian National Congress. It was opposed to the separatist Muslim nationalism which asserted itself under the leadership of Jinnah. It should be noted that there are striking similarities between Hindu and Muslim nationalism. Both of them have a strong tinge of religiosity. Muslim nationalism like Hindu nationalism, looked back to its own tradition and was fearful of losing its identity under the dominance of the Hindu majority. Pandit Nehru rightly says that both Hindu and Muslim nationalism "tried to fit in, as far as possible, the new scientific and political habits". They could neither challenge the old nor reject the new. Thus the attempt to harmonize them was bound to fail. This is true also of those Muslims who were within the Indian National Congress while this characterisation of the state of mind of the Muslims is broadly true both of those inside and outside the Congress. Maulana Azad must be recognised as an exception. He would never disavow his leadership of the nationalist Muslims but it would be wrong to regard him as representing the general divided state of mind and thought of the community.

The nationalist Muslims were "all upper middle class folk, and there were no dynamic personalities among them. They took to their profession and business. Their method was one of drawing room meetings and mutual arrangements and pacts and at this game their rivals, the communal leaders, were greater adepts. . . the collapse and the elimination of the nationalist Muslims was one of the factors responsible for the sorry state of affairs". Humayun Kabir points out that the policy of the British Government (conferring of Communal Award), lack of mass support, and dependence on sentiments of loyalty to the past made them ineffective. They became very much like the protestants in the Irish Home Rule Movement. It is to be noted that there was a lack of ideological clarity among the nationalist Muslims. In the Bijnor by-election to Congress Muslim workers were dressed in the green Islamic colour, carried the Islamic flag with the crescent and star, and raised the cry of Allah-Akbar at their meetings", says Professor Suhrawardi. A. K. Majumdar asserts that "even in the Congress, the Muslims never coalesced with the Hindus to lose their identity as did the Parsis". The tragedy of the nationalist Muslims was that

they could "neither influence Muslims and their leaders nor the Hindus and their leaders. They were helpless and remained in the vacuum", says Acharya Kripalani.

The assessment of the nationalist Muslims would be incomplete and misleading if the character of the Indian National Congress is not properly analysed, without a reference to Azad's role in politics and his personality. The greatest single factor weakening the nationalist Muslims was Congress itself. V.C. Smith has discussed the point in detail with special reference to Gandhi's attitude to the Muslim problem in India.

In addition to this, the Congress never had a clear cut policy on the Hindu-Muslim question. The "militant leaders of Hindu Mahasabha who were also members of the Congress could not fail to have some influence on the Congress", says A. M. Dykov. More often than not, this influence has been great. The "uncompromising attitude of the Congress and its wishful thinking that it represents the whole of the India" antagonized a large section of the Muslims which indirectly weakened the position of the nationalist Muslims.

No leader of the Congress could properly estimate the potentiality of the League leadership. Till 1937 no attempt was made for mutual understanding. As a matter of fact "there was no difference in social or economic policy serious enough to make Congress-League coalitions unnatural or unworkable, and the Muslims therefore felt, rightly or wrongly, that they were excluded from office, merely because the Congress was essentially a Hindu body". Moreover, as Dr. Z. A. Ahmed has pointed out, the attitude of the Congress was that of "a highly deplorable vacillation and lack of self confidence...the field was left entirely open to communal and reactionary individuals and organizations." Consequently, all the nationalist Muslims were not only misunderstood but denounced even by their colleagues in the Congress and their contribution to political life was lost sight of. They were regarded as mere tools of the Hindu majority by the Muslims outside the Congress fold. Qazi Abdul Ghaffar has rightly said that it was nationalist Muslims who made Congress a "nationalist organization." It was their leaders who fought tooth and nail against Jinnah's slogan of "separate Islamic nationality". And the tragic conclusion to the politics of the nationalist Muslim

and the life mission of Azad was the acceptance of partition by the Congress.

Azad, however, was more than a leader of the nationalist Muslims. It was, of course, the responsibility of the leaders including Azad to educate them. But Azad did not possess all the necessary qualities of a leader in the situation which faced him. He was a thinker who could work from above and not with the people. His temperament was lofty and aloof. In one of his letters he wrote that, "it was politics which discovered me". He was the product as also the projector of Islamic renaissance, the wide world of Islam and he sought to work out the lessons of that inspiration in the land to which he belonged. Though India was his field of activity, he exercised considerable influence on the life of other Islamic countries. "Very deeply read in the philosophy of the East and the West he has shaped the nationalist movement even outside India by the power of his pen" says Yusuf Meherally. He is justly compared to the "pre-Revolution philosophy of French Encyclopaedists." It will be a very great injustice if Azad is to be wholly equated with the nationalists inside and outside the Congress. His *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* is capable of producing an intellectual revolution in India, as well as in other Muslim countries. A.B. Rajput describing the influence of Azad says: "Caesar was man of the moment and Paul a man of future, Caesar was the symbol of his age and Paul was the symbol of those prophetic qualities which create a future age. But Abul Kalam Azad happily combines in him the qualities of both Caesar and Paul, for his actions and achievements, though symbolical of the present age, required, yet another age to be fully understood and recognized! His *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* is as important as the Commentaries by Iqbal, Tamyian and Hafeez Iqbal Qayyum. It is also based upon "truth, reason and wisdom" It is a contribution to the cause of man's intellectual emancipation. The greatness of Azad lies in the fact that he fully embodied and represented the spirit of his age. John Gunther therefore says that Azad was a modernist though an orthodox Muslim. His modernism lay in his correct appreciation of the existing situation and in evolving a philosophy and programme of action which synthesized the legacy of the past and the promise of the future. As Kirpalani says, "Azad regarded the Indian

national struggle as not only a duty to the motherland but also to Islam." S. M. Ikram has delineated the basic merits of *Ilmulkalam* (Dialectics), wide publicity of Quranic teaching and raising the standard of religious writings.

With the same insight Azad discussed the problems of philosophy of religion, provided a firm basis to his political ideas. He departed from religious revivalism after 1920. He was closer to Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das than to Maulana Mohammed Ali and Jinnah. Thereafter he not only realized but advocated the futility of Islamic government and Quranic politics. Dr. Ashraf who worked with Azad as his secretary says that Azad began to consider socialism as a healthy system and therefore supported progressive movement in politics and artistic sensitivity and scholarly detachment made him shy of coming closer to the masses and assuming active leadership."

It should also be made clear that when criticism is made of Azad what is criticized is not his political ideas but his role in the Congress. On the one hand he was criticized by fanatic Muslims like Maulana Maudoodi and by the leaders of the Muslim League on the other. Maudoodi is critical because he believed that Muslims themselves should form a party guided by the Quran. He therefore described Azad's advice to the people to join the Congress as suicidal. But what Maudoodi really resents is Azad's abandonment of revivalism and romanticism. Azad, however, would never have taken such a retrograde step.

The Leaguers, whose approach was fanatical and unreal, criticized Azad as the enemy of the Muslim interests in India. Jinnah's telegram to Azad is an example of it. "I refuse to discuss with you by correspondence or otherwise as you have completely forfeited the confidence of Muslims in India. Can you not realize you are made a showboy Congress President to give it a colour that it is national to deceive foreign countries. You represent neither Muslims nor Hindus." It is also not true that Azad failed in evolving from within Islam a political doctrine which could justify a composite India. "Nationalism, which he could equate with human fraternity."

Mohammed Sadiq expresses the view that Azad "was quite as destitute of self restraint and self criticism as Maulvi Zafar Ali and was almost always carried away by his love of rhetoric and flamboyant effects." He says that Azad "can understand the

situation well but he cannot mould himself accordingly. He can fathom the mind of the public but he cannot go beyond convictions to satisfy them. He can keep his mind and heart at ease during tumult and strife but he cannot use the height of public emotion for his own good.

The critics of Azad's philosophy are short sighted. He correctly visualized and understood the character of Islam which is no longer "unitary power, no more caliphal, no more pan-Islamic. It is fractured into numerous nations."

Azad remained an intriguing and dominant figure in the world of Islam. It was mainly because of his epoch-making personality. A "more colourful personality than that of Abul Kalam Azad has rarely walked across the stage of modern Indian history." Azad's political ideals present a good example for modern Islam in India. Unlike Sir Syed he was completely successful in erecting the edifice of progressive and modern religion and political philosophy. His political ideas can be compared with any great thinker or philosopher of the Islamic world. In India and Pakistan they will have an abiding influence and relevance.

J. B. KRIPALANI

It is too early to make a comprehensive and critical study of Maulana Azad's personality, his many accomplishments and his contribution to the political, intellectual and cultural life of the country. Personalities who play a significant part in the contemporary political and intellectual life of a nation need time before a proper assessment of their work can be made. Yet, so much is known of the Maulana Sahib that time may make little difference in any critical estimate.

My acquaintance with him dates as far back as 1913. It was through the columns of his weekly Urdu journal, *Al-Hilal*. Those were the great days of Indian journalism—the days of Tilak, Bipin Pal and Aurobindo and a host of other writers. Maulana's journalistic contribution ranked among the best. I was then a professor of history and politics in a college in Bihar. It was a wonder to me how a man so young in years and who knew no modern European language could yet discuss the internal and international contemporary political scene with the assurance of a mature and well-trained expert. He viewed the question of Indian freedom in the context of colonialism in general and the Islamic lands in particular. For him, the emancipation of India from the shackles of British imperialism was a necessary condition for breaking the chains that had been and were being forged by Western imperialist nations, principally British, to bind Islamic lands. Indian soldiers had been used everywhere to enslave other lands and peoples. For the Maulana, therefore, the Indian national struggle was not only a duty to the motherland but also to Islam.

For what the Maulana wrote in his paper and his suspected

revolutionary activities, he was interned in Ranchi in 1916. At Ranchi, too, though I had not yet met him personally, I was in touch with him through mutual friends in the revolutionary movement of those days.

The Maulana Sahib was released from detention in 1920. The Independence and the Khilafat movements had already started under Gandhiji's leadership. The prominent Moslem leaders in the movement were Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari, Maulana Sahib and the Ali brothers. The last, the Ali brothers, were then the most active and popular leaders. They were a contrast to the first three, who were urbane, refined and sensitive, but more useful in the the Council Chamber than at public meetings and demonstrations. Maulana Sahib was often present at public and Khilafat gatherings, but he would quietly and unobtrusively take his place at the back of the platform; he would rarely speak. But when he was prevailed upon to do so, it was a delight to listen to his silvery eloquence and well-reasoned presentation of a cause he had made his own. There was no effort to rouse emotions. Yet, in his case reason could be so reasonably convincing that it did affect the emotions. Once I asked Gandhiji why he appeared to prefer the Ali brothers with their exuberant spirit and loud tone to the intellectual, cultural and retiring Maulana Sahib. Gandhiji's reply was significant. He said that he knew the great learning of the Maulana and his refined ways, but however much he tried to induce him to the forefront, he would resist the attempt. This would not make for leadership of a popular movement. I have not related this talk to make any invidious comparison but in the interest of historical truth and to bring out the character of the Maulana.

But what he lacked in mass appeal at the time was more than made up by his unswerving and steady loyalty to his ideals of national independence and Hindu-Moslem unity. Many of his Moslem compatriots of those days fell a prey to the British policy of keeping the two major communities apart, but the Maulana remained always faithful to the path he had chalked out for himself in his early youth. He steadily worked on, undeterred by the opposition of his community and the insults heaped upon him.

In 1923, he was chosen the President of the special session

of the Congress held in Delhi. It was his moderating influence that avoided a cleavage at the time between the Pro-Changers and the No-Changers.

What then are the outstanding impressions left on those who had the privilege of being associated with the Maulana for more than three decades, particularly in the days of India's struggle for Independence? It is that in matters fundamental, he had thought out things for himself in his early youth and had come to certain definite conclusions. These were that India must be free, free not only for its own sake but for the sake of the rest of the colonial world, including the Islamic countries. There was, therefore, no cleavage between his duties as a citizen of India and as a Moslem divine. Also, when like some others, he joined the non-violent movement for the independence of India under Gandhiji's leadership, he did so with the utmost sincerity and conviction. He realized that the only way to Independence was to bring into the movement the masses of India, without whose combined action freedom of the country would be impossible. This could only be done through avoidance of secrecy and through non-violence. Fortified by this conviction, he never wavered in his faith or in the leadership of Gandhiji. Of course, like many others he did not believe in non-violence as a creed, but he remained loyal to the policy that had been adopted by the Congress after due and careful thought and consideration on practical grounds of what was possible. For Maulana Sahib, there was no further toying with the idea of a violent revolution or association with its advocates. The same cannot be said of several other leaders, specially in Bengal.

These convictions stood the test of time. No vicissitude in his own political life or the alignment of forces in the country could change them. No misrepresentation of his motives, no calumny, no insults from inferior persons—and he was a sensitive soul—could deflect him from the path he had chosen for himself. He, who stood for good sense and moderation in all things, stood like a rock where his basic convictions were concerned. About these there could be no compromise.

Though my personal association with the Maulana began in 1920, it was as a member of the Congress Working Committee and the General Secretary of the Congress that

I came in close contact with him. It was not always possible for me to see eye to eye with Maulana Sahib in all the details of the Congress Party, or on particular issues, but one could not fail to appreciate his general approach to national problems and his intellectual grasp of things. It was also difficult not to be impressed by his scholarship, which was deep and wide. It did not sit heavy on him. For years the Congress Working Committee was just like a family, and in the family circle Maulana Sahib's great scholarship and his genial temperament enlivened his conversation whenever we of the Congress Working Committee met at lunch, tea or dinner, or when at Wardha we enjoyed the simple but large-hearted hospitality of that patriot of the mercantile community, Jamuna Lal Bajaj.

The company was regaled with anecdotes drawn from history, geography and the biographies of great personages in history, particularly from Islamic countries. He would tell us where a particular custom rose or from where a particular fruit or dish was introduced in India. With Sarojini Naidu's not always quite innocent gossip, with Sardar's humorous sallies and Maulana Sahib's learned and well-informed conversation, the company never lacked interest. I believe that in those anxious days of our struggle for Independence, full of complicated difficulties, we enjoyed life with a zest that can come only from tension created by a high and noble purpose.

From the very beginning of his career, the Maulana Sahib was something of an internationalist. The circumstances of his birth, upbringing, and education and studies endowed him with a wide perspective. As an Islamic divine one would have expected him to be rather orthodox in his religious views. But his attitude towards religion was very liberal and catholic. This was not because he was indifferent or easy-going but because of his philosophical and historical knowledge and his understanding and generous heart. With his innate goodness, it was impossible for him to think that salvation for humanity lay through a particular religion, a particular prophet or one set of doctrines, rituals and dogmas. For instance, he would not have considered that the men of other faiths with whom he was associated in national life, would have been better or more acceptable to him if they had but accepted Islam. This was the attitude of some Moslem leaders who took part in the Khilafat and the national

movement in the 'twenties. Maulana considered that the essence of religion lay in moral conduct and, if one delved deeper into the dark recesses of life, in mysticism. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru was right when in Parliament, paying tribute to his memory, he said that the Maulana Sahib reminded him of scholars and humanists of the European Renaissance and the French Encyclopaedists of the 18th century. I wonder if when Jawaharlalji said this, he realized that while Maulana's thought was free as theirs, in his actions in social life his conduct like theirs was restricted and inhibited by well-established custom and convention. May be, like them and the great Hindu philosophers and pandits, Maulana Azad realized that the learned had no right to confuse the understanding of the ordinary man wedded to form and convention so long as these were not harmful. Yet the Maulana also appreciated those who deviated from social conventions in order to meet the requirements of modern life and thought. It is this trait in the Maulana Sahib that prevented him from being a religious and social reformer. His very intellectual range precluded him from a role which needs an amount of dogmatism, if not fanaticism.

His was essentially a voice of reason, which would also mean moderation and sanity. These qualities were characteristic of him even in the revolutionary fight for India's Independence. Though he guided the crowd, he was shy of it; he was not of it. Gandhiji influenced many aristocrats by birth or position to rub shoulders with the crowd in those days. But the Maulana throughout remained his own self, 'an aristocratic intellectual who viewed the crowd with indulgence from his great eminence.

However, all this did not make him insensitive to justice and fair play. It is well known that after Independence many popular causes had his support in the counsels of the mighty created by the new order. Among them his was an independent voice. Where none could oppose, he ventured to remonstrate. On rare occasions, he did succeed. On his death, it was thus natural for popular opinion to feel that the 'restraining influence of sanity had disappeared from the political life of the country.

The Maulana was pre-eminently an intellectual and a scholar. Like several other leaders in the national movement, given a free

choice, he would not have entered the political arena and would have pursued in quiet the life of letters. But in a subject country there can be no free choice for the sensitive and the conscientious. It is not politics that draws them. It is the cause of justice and patriotism that beckons them to the barricades. We often hear of the sacrifices made in the cause of freedom, but no sacrifice is as great as that which obliges a person to leave his work in life, the work for which he has an aptitude and a genius, to join the freedom fight. This supreme sacrifice was made by the Maulana Sahib, but it would appear that this great sacrifice did not leave the world of letters and learning impoverished. The books that Maulana Sahib produced are monumental. Among them is the commentary on the Holy Quran. His autobiography, which he had just finished, will soon see the light of day. If he had devoted his life to letters alone and let the stirring events of the Independence movement pass him by, it is possible that his writings, though numerous, might have lacked the maturity and wisdom of a life passed in a strenuous struggle with its elements of suffering and even of tragedy.

Here then was Maulana Sahib, a great divine, a great scholar, a great orator in Urdu, a great fighter for national freedom. With all his fervent love for the country, he was an internationalist at the core. Great as was his contribution to the freedom fight, his memory will live more as a harmonious personality, full of knowledge and wisdom.

It is therefore nothing to wonder that the common man instinctively felt a great anxiety when he came to learn about the serious condition of Maulana's health a couple of days before his death. The mournful demonstration after his death that was witnessed in Delhi, and the universal sorrow and gloom in which the country was enveloped, showed that the common people, who had but a rare and distant glimpse of him knew what they had lost: a philosopher, friend and guide. It was truly said by his vocal admirers that with him passed away an epoch of Indian history and Indian cultural values which can perhaps never again be re-created. The Maulana was one of the bright gems of this epoch.

A Resplendent Personality

SYED MAHMUD

In the Jail at Ahmednagar where Maulana Azad, as President of the Indian National Congress, was confined along with his colleagues of the Working Committee, as a result of the adoption of the Quit India resolution in August 1942, I often found him murmuring to himself in a deep undertone a couplet from the Arab poet, Abul Ala Maari, meaning:

*We are of those for whom there is no middle station in life,
We occupy the pinnacles or we seek the depths of the grave.*

Another line also, and this from a Persian poet, had an equal fascination for him in those days:

*The taste of me may be insipid; but my worth is great;
I am a fruit grown before the season.*

The two couplets typify the mind of Maulana Azad. He always stood by himself, as a personality apart, and consequently his worth cannot be measured by the common standard. Whatever the role he was called upon to fulfil in life, whether as scholar, man of letters, thinker, politician, leader of men, or fighter in the cause of liberty, truth and justice, he lent to it a dignity and poise entirely his own.

It was as one learned in the Islamic lore and as an originator of a new style of expression in Urdu that Maulana Azad first attracted my attention. That was in 1906. I had read some of the essays which he had contributed to his own journal, *Lisan-as-Sidq* ('The Tongue of Truth') and to the *Vakil* of Amritsar.

I was then just seventeen years old. So high was the estimation formed of him in my mind that I dared not venture to go to him direct. The interview was sought at Lucknow through an elderly scholar of the time whom I knew, Allama Abdallah Imadi. Prior to my introduction, I had expected to meet in Maulana Azad a venerable personality. But I was taken aback when I had to face a mere youth, more or less of my age (he was actually eighteen), of thin physique, rosy cheeks, and starlit eyes, tastefully dressed, impressively cool and collected in behaviour, and gifted with engaging conversation talents. He appeared to me a Prince come from a fairyland, and not exactly a Maulana. I was not alone in receiving such an amazing impression of him at this time of his life. Even elderly men like the late Maulana Hali, Dr. Sir Mohd. Iqbal and Sir Abdul Qader had expressed an equal surprise when they first beheld him at an annual meeting of the Anjuman-e-Islamia, Lahore, to which he had been invited. He had been scheduled to address the Anjuman on no less a subject than 'Rationalism in Islam'. The elderly organizers of the meeting who received him were at first under the impression that Maulana Azad, the Editor of *Lisan-us-Sidq*, had sent his son to read out his paper on the subject assigned to him. Their amazement knew no bounds when they were told that it was he who was Abul Kalam.

The second time I met him was in 1908 at Aligarh when he kindly came to visit me in my room at the M.A.O. College. Soon after, I left for England and when I came back to India in 1912, Maulana Azad, as Editor of *Al-Hilal*, had already become a name to conjure with. He was heading a powerful political awakening in the land, and he was then 24.

Maulana Azad came of a scholarly family of Delhi. Born at Mecca while his father was in exile there, and educated on the return of his parents to India in the traditional Islamic lore at the Madrasas of Calcutta, he had an opportunity to go round the countries of West Asia even while he was a youth. At Cairo where he stayed for some time, he imbibed the spirit of the reformatory movement which had been launched by Syed Jamaluddin Afghani and Shayk Muhammad Abduh. The former was the leader of a powerful pan-Islamic movement intent on the emancipation of the West Asian countries from the imperialistic hold, particularly of Britain. It was the

influence of these two great scholars which stimulated the mind of the young Abul Kalam to inaugurate a like movement in his own country.

From the very day of its inception, *Al-Hilal* had pitted itself against the retention of British power in India, and that was not an easy thing to do for any journal in the atmosphere of the times, particularly for one started by a member of the minority community which had doggedly been denied Governmental favours since the days of the Indian Revolution of 1857. The policy of divide-and-rule had reached its climax by the time *Al-Hilal* appeared on the scene, so much so that the Moslems of India had developed the mood to placate the British Government in every possible way and receive favours at their hands. To rouse such a people to action against the British authorities in the land was, on the face of it, a vain venture. But the young editor of the journal felt otherwise. He realized that it was only in moments of depression, such as existed at the time in India, that mighty energies could be released for heroic deeds, and he sounded his trumpet call:

'There comes in the history of nations a time when the desire to live becomes a sin, and there is no greater sin than to live on. At such a time, the number of those behind high walls and iron bars increases and the trade of the ironmonger splendidly thrives. Ropes hang on the branches of trees, and wooden planks are aloft for the sons of Adam to walk on to their doom. Such a day comes only to usher in another day, when the seed sown by executions puts forth the fruit of a living and abiding life.'

That was the tempo of *Al-Hilal* when it was started, and Maulana wrote:

'My resolve is not to seek a task, but to seek first men to do it. In this world, there never was any lack of tasks. But there has always been a dearth of men to undertake them. The present age is an age of wars. All around us are hosts of enemies, and there is not a single corner where armours do not ring. So, there is no lack of fields for action. Those who possess the spirit of a soldier and the courage of a hero

must come out to face life as they find it and face its trials. I assert once again that there is no lack of tasks. What we really lack among us are patriots and fighters.'

The call of Maulana was heard throughout the country. The Balkan war with its tragic consequences to the Moslems abroad afforded occasion for action. It roused the readers of *Al-Hilal* to a frenzied state of mind to pull down the edifice of British imperialism in the land, and I for my part could not help being caught by the wave of emotion which passed over us at the time.

It was again at Lucknow that I next met Maulana. The occasion was the meeting of the Foundation Committee appointed by the Moslem Educational Conference at Aligarh to set up a Moslem university at Aligarh. This was the time when the reputation of *Al-Hilal* was at its highest, and Maulana was being looked upon as the soldier of freedom *par excellence*. The meeting was held at the Baradari of Qaisar Bagh. The moment he entered the hall, cries were raised from every corner of it that he should address them. Those who had already made up their mind to support the acceptance of the terms of the Government did not feel comfortable at the thought of Maulana making any speech at all at the meeting. But the cry was incessant; and when he did speak, the feeling against the motion grew so intense among the audience that it was resolved that the terms offered be rejected. The speech signified an emphatic divergence from the Aligarh attitude in politics. Maulana was of the decided opinion that the Moslems of India should give up altogether their profession of loyalty to the British Government and release their mind to express itself boldly in favour of freedom from its age-long domination.

Al-Hilal naturally could not be tolerated by the British authorities in the country. The story of its suspension and the starting of *Al-Balagh* and of its suspension also is well-known, as also the story of Maulana's prolonged internment at Ranchi. It was a period of hard experiences and firm resolves. So, when he came out of Ranchi in the year 1920, he took to an intensely active political life. In the pages of *Al-Hilal*, he had already powerfully advanced the view that the solution for the Moslem problem in India lay in a hearty co-operation in politics with

their Hindu brethren. But after Ranchi, this became an obsession with him.

That was the time when Mahatma Gandhi entered the political arena in India. Maulana met him for the first time during that year at Delhi. The occasion was the assemblage of Hindu and Moslem leaders to consider the question of forming a joint deputation to wait upon the Viceroy. The manner in which Maulana Azad opposed the move and recommended instead absolute non-cooperation with the British Government was so well appreciated by Mahatma Gandhi that a bond of lasting friendship was forged at once between the two mighty minds. From 1920 till Mahatmaji's tragic death in 1948, the two marched hand in hand together to victory.

The period (1920-1947) was one of strenuous struggle against British imperialism. It began with the Khilafat and non-cooperation movement. The march for freedom was marked by repeated incarceration of the two leaders and their colleagues and co-workers. But it ended in the disappearance of the British Empire in India. Unfortunately, the freedom gained was not of the type the two leaders had dreamt of. It was accompanied by sorrow and suffering and the partition of the country. An account of this lengthy ordeal does not appropriately fall within the purview of the subject assigned to me in this volume. It will be dealt with by others. I may only refer to an episode in this epic struggle which may throw light on the personality of the Maulana. I refer to his arrest along with C.R. Das, and his subsequent trial in Calcutta in 1921, which elicited a statement from him addressed to the Court which should form a distinct chapter in the history of India's struggle for freedom.

This document, which he addressed to the presiding Judge, was in Urdu and was subsequently published under the title of *Qawl-e-Faisal* or *Final Verdict*. I quote from this a few brief passages just to show of what stuff Maulana was made.

*How befitting it would be if the cup-bearer stigmatizes me of
drunkenness;
For my cup still smells of the drink I took last night.*

Praise be to God Unique.

'I had no intention to give any verbal or written statement here. This is a place where we have neither any hopes to cherish nor any desires to wish, nor even any complaints to make. This is only a turnstile without passing through which we cannot reach our destination. Therefore, for a short while, we are obliged to break our journey here. Had it not been so we would have gone straightaway to jail... .

'History bears witness that whenever the ruling class took up arms against freedom and truth, the law-courts served as the most convenient and unfailing weapons for them... . Next to battlefields, the greatest acts of injustice in the world have been committed in the law courts. Right from the revered founders of religions to those who have laboured in the field of science to bring comfort to human life, there was no noble group of men who were not produced as criminals before the courts of unjust governments... . I admit that the terrible Roman courts of the second century, or the mysterious inquisitions of the Middle Ages do not exist any more. But I am not prepared to admit that human nature in our times has been purged of the emotions under which those courts worked... .

'I confess that I have used similar or even more emphatic language not merely in the two speeches under review, but in several other speeches as well which I have had to deliver during the course of the last two years. To speak in that strain is an imperative duty for me, and I cannot desist from discharging it simply because of the threat that it would be regarded a crime under Section 124-A. I want to repeat that language even now, and will go on repeating it so long as I can talk. And if I do not do so, I shall consider myself guilty of a heinous crime... .

'I believe that liberty is the birthright of every nation and individual. No man, nor any man-made bureaucracy, possesses the right to enslave human beings. Howsoever attractive the names that we may coin for slavery, slavery will remain slavery all the same. It is imposed on man by man against the will of God. Therefore, I refuse to accept the present Government as a rightful government, and consequently think it to be a national, religious and human duty to relieve my country and nation of their servitude... .

'I am a Musalman, and as such, my religious duty is the same. Islam does not recognize any autocracy or bureaucracy. It came in to restore the lost freedom of humanity, the freedom which had been confiscated by kings, foreign governments, selfish religious leaders and powerful elements of society. The autocrats thought that might was right; but Islam proclaimed from its very birth that might was not right. It swept off all racial and national distinctions and showed the world at large that all human beings held an equal rank, and all possessed equal rights. It proclaimed that excellence did not lie in race, nationality or colour. It was only righteous action which counted, and the noblest among men was he who did his work most righteously.

'Such was the charter of human rights issued eleven hundred years before the French Revolution. It was not mere pronouncement, but a practical order of life which was set up and which, in the words of the historian Gibbon, "has no equal"...

'In this world, "evil" like "good" desires to live. However much we may dislike "evil", we cannot condemn its urge to live. The struggle for survival between the two has already begun in India; and this is by no means an extraordinary phenomenon. If in the eyes of bureaucracy, it is a crime to struggle for freedom and righteousness and those, who in the name of justice are out to put an end to their unjustified presence in the land, are to be regarded as criminals and punished, then I confess that I am a criminal. I am one of those who have sown the seed of this crime in the heart of the people, and have devoted their whole life to water the plant. I am the first among the Moslems of India to invite in 1920 the entire nation to indulge in this crime, and have within three years roused in them the urge to come out of the maze in which the craftiness of the Government had wilfully kept them...

'My firm conviction is that I should preach this gospel as a matter of sacred duty. I cannot abstain from discharging it simply because Section 124-A terms it a crime. Even now, I say what I have said before, and will go on repeating it so long as I have any breath left in me.'

The concluding paragraph of this document, while asking

the Judge to make haste in winding up the proceedings, ends with these words:

‘Mr Magistrate!

‘I shall not take any more time of the Court. It is a very interesting and instructive chapter of history which we both are equally busy in preparing. While I get the criminals’ dock, to you comes the magisterial seat; but I admit that for this work your seat is as much important as this dock. Come then, let us finish quickly this memorable act which is soon to become a legend. The historian is watching us. Allow me to occupy this place repeatedly and you may also go on writing your judgments as often. The process will continue for some time, and then the gates of another court will open wide. That will be the Court of the Lord where Time will act as Judge. It will pass the judgment, and that will be the final Judgement.

‘And praise be to God in the beginning and in the end.’

The words have a prophetic ring about them. In his very lifetime, the gates of God’s Court were thrown open, and he heard the judgment delivered by Time to which he had pointed.

It was during the first phase of Maulana’s active political life after his release from Ranchi that I decided to work with him. Once the decision was taken, I cheerfully went through the mill with him and others till the light of freedom came to us and the country at large.

To speak of the personality of Maulana is not easy. He was a man of many parts. The world knows him by his scholarship and by the tremendous sacrifices which he made for his country. But the distinguishing qualities of his mind and heart were such that only those who had intimate connection with him could know. I may refer here to but a few qualities which have left a deep impression on my mind

Maulana had inherited the great respect in which his family had been held. Thousands of Moslems in Bengal loved him as the son of a great religious *pir*. When his father died in 1909, his huge following came to acclaim Maulana Azad as his successor and offered *nazars* or gifts. Maulana would not accept

the *nazars*. He said that these gifts, which were mostly in the form of money presents, should go back to the poorer among their families, and he adhered to this attitude throughout his life. In the most trying moments of life, he would not communicate even to the most intimate of his friends that he was in straitened circumstances. Whatever came to him through his own exertion he shared with the less fortunate around him even in the days of his Ministership. He was averse to keeping anything for himself for the morrow. The old proverb held good in his case. The left hand did not know what the right hand gave away. He was very unhappy when he was reminded by anyone of the favours received at his hands.

Another trait which distinguished Maulana was his aversion to speak harshly of those who had shown harshness to him in life. Everyone knows how a section of the Moslems always treated him for his criticism of the weaknesses which had crept into Islam and which a good many Moslems cherished as religion. Never for once did he answer the gibes levelled at him. Mr. Jinnah's behaviour towards him is well-known, but never for a moment would he think of retaliating. I remember the great meeting that was held in Lucknow after the partition. Even those Moslems who had derided Maulana in the pre-partition days had come to realize how mistaken they were in their political attitude. They were present at the gathering. So, when Maulana came to address the huge concourse, almost everyone expected that he would take the occasion to condemn Mr. Jinnah and tear to pieces the policy which he had pursued resulting in unhappiness to so many, but he would not condemn anyone. The very first words which came out of his mouth were: 'I have not come here to condemn anyone. What was not to have happened has happened. We have now to think of the future.' The words created a deep impression on the audience. They realized that Maulana was made of a moral texture worthy of the really great. Never in his lifetime did he ever speak a harsh word about Mr. Jinnah. If by chance old memories were revived for him, he would simply say with a sigh: 'Why expose the scar on one's own heart. No one is to blame. I alone am to blame. I was so incompetent that I could not succeed in keeping back the Moslems of India from committing deliberate suicide.'

Another quality of the mind of Maulana which impressed me immensely was his versatility. Whatever the subject of discussion in any private gathering or conversation dealing with literature, philosophy, religion, politics or science, whether of the East or of the West, he used to take a scholarly interest and offer comments such as only those deeply conversant therewith could offer. He had a prodigious memory and could recite appropriate lines from poetry and narrate with ease and precision events forgotten long ago.

Maulana was a hard worker. Whatever the task that was entrusted to him, he would throw himself into it with zeal, and sometimes he overworked himself. And whatever moments of leisure he could snatch from the work in hand he would occupy himself with reading some new work that came out of the press dealing with subjects of interest to him. It is not well-known that through his self-study he had acquired a remarkable proficiency in the English language such as enabled him to be in touch with the latest thought in science, literature, philosophy and politics. So obsessed was he with his work and his reading that it was with the greatest reluctance that he would agree to give interviews to visitors. People attributed this to lack of courtesy. But the fact is that he had no taste for idle talk. Whenever he thought that something good would result to anyone or to the country at large, he would readily consent to give interviews to those who sought them.

One great quality of Maulana was the quickness with which he would get at the marrow of things. He could sift the dross from the gold with the facility of an adept. That was the quality which impressed all those who had the opportunity to work with him. On occasions of deliberations in huge gatherings when confusion prevailed in thought due to conflicting ways of approach to the problem at issue, the mind of Maulana would concentrate on the essentials and find a way out agreeable to the contending parties. He would never lose his head in the midst of tumult and disorder, but coolly and with firmness collect the minds around him to think the problem before them on certain definite lines, and help them to reach a solution such as the occasion demanded. That was why even while he was in his 'twenties he was called upon by venerable heads like Shaikul-Hind of Deoband and Maulana Abdul Bari of Farangimahal

to preside over the meetings of the Khilafat conferences, and that was why he was called upon at the age of 35 by grey-headed politicians and literary geniuses like Pandit Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammad Ali and Dr. Ansari, to be the President of the Indian National Congress.

One supreme quality in him which distinguished him from all others was the firmness of his resolve. He took decision after cool and careful deliberation, and once he took a decision he adhered to it with such tenacity that no one could prevail upon him to budge from his position. It was this peculiarity in him that the late Maulana Mohammad Ali used to designate as 'stubbornness'.

From the time he started his *Al-Hilal*, one supreme idea functioned in his mind rendering every activity of his subservient to it, and that was the freedom of his country to be achieved through Hindu-Muslim unity. His emphasis was on unity more than on freedom, for his belief was that freedom was bound to come one day. He said:

'If an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim from the heights of the Qutub Minar, "Discard Hindu-Moslem unity and within 24 hours Swaraj is yours", I will refuse the proffered Swaraj, but will not budge an inch from my stand. The refusal of Swaraj will affect only India while the end of our unity will be the loss of the entire human world.'

That was exactly the attitude of Gandhiji on the question of unity and freedom. In the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements, Maulana felt he was witnessing the fulfilment of his dreams but the developments which followed were a source of immense disquietude to him. There arose around him deep and forbidding darkness; that darkness pained his sensitive soul; but he doggedly steered his ways through it to destiny. Neither the constant persecutions of the authorities, nor the ever-mounting tirades of his own brethren, nor even the bitings of a bitter Jinnah could deter him from his purpose. He would not compromise with evil.

Maulana's passionate calls were not heeded. The differences between the two communities multiplied as time went on, ending in the catastrophe of 1947. I know what that meant to Maulana. Every dagger one Indian thrust into the body of another was a dagger thrust into his own soul. He bore the agony in silence, but resolutely set his mind to the task of rebuilding India on new foundations. The foresight and the wisdom which he brought to bear on the task and the magnificent manner in which he lent his co-operation to his colleagues in the Government to steady the course of the country in moments of crisis, will not easily be forgotten by all concerned. In fact, this was borne out by the wave of sorrow that passed through every Indian heart when he suddenly passed away in the early hours of 22 February, 1958.

Now that he has gone, his greatness has all of a sudden been recognized by one and all. When I say this, I do not mean that in his lifetime he was not regarded as great or respected as such. Had it been otherwise, I dare say, he would not have been elected twice as the President of the All-India National Congress, nor entrusted with a pivotal position in the delicate negotiations which were carried on in the final days of India's struggle for freedom. In truth he was great from the first to the last. He was destined to be among those great sons of India whose function it was to cheer us in moments of despair, to guide us to show us the way, to lead us on, to solve our problems, and add authority to our decisions. I know that his inner loneliness and his characteristic reserve were at time liable to be misunderstood. But this reserve was only a way to conserve his energy for potent expression in moments of dire need. In the death of Maulana we have lost a part of our own selves. India has lost not only a great and illustrious son, but a great friend and a wise leader. But we have to bear the loss and undeterred by the ephemeral discomforts of the day, pursue his ideal, the ideal of Hindu-Moslem unity for which Mahatma Gandhi laid down his life, and for which Maulana Azad lived till his last moments.

Commentator of the Holy Quran

MAULANA SAYYID SULAIMAN NADVI

To those who have an eye on the tendencies of the age, it is obvious that Musalmans are turing their minds more and more to the Holy Quran, to the exclusion, in fact, of other sources of religious knowledge, and are endeavouring with increasing zeal the earnestness to understand the Holy Book and ponder over its massage. Now, if the Quran is read only for edification and guidance in the political conduct of life, it is easy; but, if on the other hand, it is studied with a view to discovering higher thoughts and principles and deducing positive dicta of law therefrom, it is indeed most profound. The former manner of study suffices for the average believer; but there are also those among them who are in the habit of diving deep and are given to philosophic speculation. They will not be satisfied until they have got to the bottom of every commandment and probed the depths of every verse.

This manner of study and search is not possible to every one. It is, therefore, regrettable to find these days some shortsighted and superficially minded Muslims who fancy that the Holy Quran is easy not only for counsel and guidance in daily life, but also for profundities and deducting positive law from them. The result is that every Tom, Dick and Harry seems ready to venture, with great boldness, into the depths to every verse, whereas in actual fact, in venturing upon such irresponsible expositions, he only exposes the night of his own inner self.

Doubtless, it was the two weaklies of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, which created love of the

Holy Quran among young Muslims. His manner of exposition, his skill in the art of letters and the power of his pen, with which he interpreted the verses of the Holy Quran one by one to the young men of modern education, opened before them new avenues of faith and conviction and revealed to them the whole wealth, expanse and depth of the teachings of the Holy Book.

A compromise

There was need that the same powerful pen should produce a complete commentary of the Holy Book, so that this fount of light and wisdom should become available in Urdu to those who do not know Arabic. The demand became persistent from 1912. The Maulana, too, had an idea that he should write a translation and documentary in Urdu. If I remember aright, I was the first to suggest in 1914, something in the nature of a compromise between a translation and a commentary, that is, a free translation, which, though not literal should yet be faithful to the text, accompanied with exegetical notes, wherever necessary. The work required less labour. In view of the Maulana's lack of leisure, it was also possible and would have sufficed to enable the average student to understand the Holy Book. The Maulana appears to have accepted the suggestion and decided to write the "expository translation," though the idea of writing the larger commentary (*Al-Bayan*) too never left his mind. But with the outbreak of the Great War of 1914, commenced a regime of arrests and incarcerations, to which Maulana Azad became to frequent victim. His manuscripts shared his fortune, and owing to the many vicissitudes in the author's own life, were at last scattered beyond recovery. Whenever the Maulana, in jail or out, found some leisure, he tried to put them together, and have in doing so must recalled Hali's couplet:

At last the auspicious time arrived and the Maulana published the first volume of his expository translation under the title of *Tarjaman-Ul-Quran*. The volume contains a full commentary of Sura Fatiha and the free translation of five Suras from *Bagarah* to *An'am* which comprise eight

Musalman have written many commentaries of the Holy Quran and perhaps have not written even one. I say "perhaps", because the works of earlier writers have been lost, and it would be anything but proper to pass judgement upon them. In any case, of all the commentaries and exegetical work that I have seen, I have not come across any scholar with a deeper insight into the Holy Quran than Allama Ibn Taimiya and Hafiz Ibn Qayyam. Abdul Fateh Abdul Karim of Mosul (especially with regard to the beauty of literature and originality of thought) and among the latter day writers, Hazrat Shah Wallullah of Delhi. The commentaries of Allama Ibn Taimiya and Hafiz Ibn Qayyam have perished but in truth every work of theirs is but a fragment of the commentary of the Holy Quran.

Commentaries

As a matter of fact, commentaries are of two kinds. They are either traditional, like those of Ibn Jarir Tapari, Tha alabi, Qurtabi, Baghvi, Ibn Kathir, etc. or wholly rational like those of Abu Muslim Nishapuri, Reghib Asfahani, Imam Razi of Nishapur, Mudarik, Baidavi etc. But a commentary comprising a careful balance of reason and traditional authority, in which the traditions are thoroughly tested by the principles of evidence and reason, and reason is itself free from the tyranny of Plato and Aristotle, was never achieved in Islam except by Allama Ibn Taimiya and Hafiz Ibn Qayyam. The *Ulema* who followed tradition, became hopeless victims of Jewish folklore, while those who preferred reason lost themselves in the toils of Greek extravagances. The two above mentioned thinkers were the only ones who were at once critical of tradition and Greek thought, and knew how to separate wheat from the chaff in the latter. Above all, they derived their light from a higher source; they had drunk deep from the spring of the Prophet's wisdom and had derived their light from a higher source; they had drunk deep from the spring of the Prophet's wisdom and had derived their wealth of thought from his storehouse. Their commentaries were based upon truth, reason and wisdom. But the wine of their thought did not come from the vats of Greece, it came instead from the founts of Hijaz or from the divine springs of human nature itself.

It is a notable feature of the *Tarjaman-Ul-Quran* that its author understands the spirit of his age and has adopted the same method to fight the evil of Westernism which Ibn Taimiya and Ibn Qayyam had adopted to fight the evils which had sprung from the Tartar invasion. They diagnosed the cause of the downfall of the Muslims of their age to be their mental slavery to the Greeks; so the author of the *Tarjaman-Ul-Quran* traces the disease of the modern Muslims to their mental slavery to Western thought. His prescription is also the same, namely, that the word of God should be studied in His Apostle's own language and idiom and in the light of God-given reason.

The present volume consists of two parts. The first, a part of the author's projected commentary, *Al-Bayan*, is a full exposition of Sura *Fatima*, while the second is the expository translation of five Suras from *Bagarah* to *An'am*. The first part which is in reality half the book offers the author a wide-field for his exegetical skill and depth of thought. The Sura is expounded verse by verse and word by word in such a gripping and enlightening manner that the claim of the Sura being *Ummul-Kitab* or the Root of the Book stands almost demonstrated. It is also a resume of all the more important teachings and principles of Islam. The Holy Quran's manner of argument and the proofs and evidence of the Creator's benevolence and His being the Cherisher especially are treated in such detail that they compel one's admiration of the author's range of vision and learning.

* * *

The exposition from the Holy Quran itself of *Tauhid* and its proof, 'creation with truth', *Alhudda* and *Din* are original and profound as well as a source of faith and conviction.

The *Tarjaman-Ul-Quran* is a significant product of the age. No home should be without it, every Muslim library should have a copy of it, and every young Muslim should make it a point to study it carefully.

HUMAYUN KABIR

It was in 1936 that I first met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. I did not, however, feel a stranger, even at the first meeting. Like thousands of others of my generation, I also had seen and heard him in many public meetings and knew of his great services to the national cause. He had already become a legendary figure and people referred to him with a touch of reverence and almost awe. He was then not yet fifty but was already regarded as one of the elder statesmen of India. This was due as much to his dignity and reserve as his great reputation for judgment and wisdom. I shall never forget Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's remark, 'Do not talk of Maulana's age. He was fifty the day he was born'.

Maulana Azad had, in fact, attracted notice while he was still in his 'teens. He had a remarkable career as a student and completed the traditional routine of oriental studies by the time he was sixteen, as against the normal age of twenty or more for even the abler students. Contrary to popular belief, he did not go abroad for his studies, but was educated in Calcutta and that too mostly at home. He went out of India only after he had finished his studies and it was during his tour of centres of Islamic studies that he also paid a fleeting visit to the Al Azhar University at Cairo.

His reputation as a precocious scholar is revealed in more than one story. He had carried on a lengthy controversy by correspondence with a well-known maulavi. The debate proved inconclusive and the scholar invited Maulana Azad to come for a personal discussion. When the youthful Maulana arrived, the old maulvi politely enquired why his father had sent him

instead of coming himself. There is also the story of a meeting in Lahore where he was invited as the chief guest of the day, but he was refused entrance as no one believed that a callow youth could be the well-known savant for whom everyone was waiting.

Soon after returning from his tour abroad, Maulana Azad threw himself into the political movement. He had been attracted to politics even earlier but his contacts with political leaders in Moslem countries made him realize more keenly the need for a reorientation of Moslem politics in India. Ever since the abortive Indian revolt of 1857, Indian Musalmans had been living in an atmosphere of despondency and lack of faith. Sir Syed Ahmed tried to restore the falling fortunes of the community by a dual policy. On the one hand, he courted the favour of the ruling powers, and the other sought to keep the community away from the field of active politics. This negative aspect of his policy was bad in itself, and became a source of danger to the community and the country because of the circumstances of the day. The attempt to keep Moslems away from politics was in sharp contrast to the rising consciousness of nationalism among the Hindus and was bound to become a source of friction and misunderstanding in course of time.

Whatever may have been the justification for the policy enunciated by Sir Syed Ahmed during the last century, it had become outmoded by the time Maulana Azad appeared on the scene. He realized that the interest of Indian Moslems could be served only if they took part in the national struggle for independence. Not only so, but Maulana Azad also saw that the liberation of India was necessary for the progress and prosperity of the entire Moslem world. He, therefore, challenged the basic tenets of what had come to be known as the Aligarh Party. He repudiated the policy of co-operation with the British and separation from the Hindu laid by Sir Syed Ahmed and urged the Moslems of India to identify themselves with the national movement and oppose the forces of British imperialism.

It is interesting to note that though Maulana Azad was in this way a rebel against the political teachings of Sir Syed Ahmed, it was Sir Syed Ahmed's social and religious writings

that first inspired him to think in terms of reform and change. A study of Sir Syed Ahmed's writings convinced him that no community can flourish in the modern world unless it responds to the challenge of the new age. Sir Syed's writings also made him realize that education in the modern world cannot be complete without first-hand acquaintance with the philosophical thought, political ideas and scientific knowledge of the Western world. This realization was responsible for Maulana Azad's efforts to learn English by himself. Sir Syed Ahmed may also have been responsible for provoking in the youthful Maulana Azad a spirit of rebellion against current Moslem dogmatism and orthodoxy. Maulana Azad shared Sir Syed Ahmed's views about the need for educational reform and social change. One may say that he carried further forward the process of reform initiated by Sir Syed. Sir Syed was content to recommend changes in education, religion and society; Maulana Azad felt that similar change must also take place in the political outlook of the community.

Maulana Azad proclaimed his political credo to *Al-Hilal* which first appeared in 1912. The publication of this paper literally took Moslem India by storm. As a mere literary effort, it was something unique in the history of Urdu language and literature. Rarely has there been such a combination of rhetoric and eloquence, of wit and poetry, of biting sarcasm and lofty idealism. A new style in Urdu prose grew out of the models supplied in the editorials of *Al-Hilal*. All these moved the Moslem intelligentsia, but what captured the imagination of young men was not only poetic grace or literary excellence but the formulation and statement of a new faith. *Al-Hilal* soon became the focus where the resurgent spirit of Indian Moslems found its finest expression.

For almost fifty years, Maulana Azad stood as the champion of nationalism and progress, freedom and democracy. To some this has seemed a paradox. Maulana Azad was descended from a family of religious divines and his upbringing and training had been strictly orthodox. He became a recognized scholar in theology and Islamic lore while he was yet a young man. It was only under the influence of Sir Syed Ahmed that he started reading English after he had already completed his formal education in traditional learning. Many therefore find his role

as a reformer and patriot somewhat surprising. And yet there is nothing strange in this. It seems surprising only to those who have forgotten the traditions of early Islam with its emphasis on democracy, freedom and rationalism. It was because Maulana Azad had direct knowledge of these values that he reacted so strongly against the servile politics, the feudal class divisions and the intellectual ossification of the Indo-Mohammedan society of the day. It is also worth noting that many of his close associates in political struggle have been men trained in the traditional lore of Islam. For Maulana Azad, Islam meant freedom from political bondage, economic exploitation and intellectual obscurantism. It was the emphasis on freedom in all its aspects which dragged him from the cloister of the recluse into the battleground of politics.

The two qualities of his mind which impressed me the very first time I met Maulana Azad were the great clarity of his thought and the balance and sobriety of his judgment. He went to the heart of a problem and was able to ignore all irrelevant and extraneous issues. This capacity to pick out the essentials was derived from his scrupulous sense of justice and fair play. He never took a one-sided view of any matter and was always willing to make allowances for those who differed from him. His like or dislike of a person rarely, if ever, swayed his judgment. His intellectual detachment and his ability to take into consideration various points of view gave a peculiar weight to whatever he said. Whenever we brought a problem to him, he was able to suggest a solution that was obvious once he had formulated it, but which had somehow not occurred of anyone before.

This power of a dispassionate judgment was perhaps due to the fact that the politician was never able to submerge the scholar in Maulana Azad. The scholar is concerned with the permanent value of life, unlike the politician who usually concentrates on the events of the day. Maulana Azad was always more of a statesman than a diplomat or political tactician. He had a poet's sensitiveness but did not allow his emotions to dominate his political decisions. He tried to assess every situation with an objectivity and detachment that was surprising to friend and foe alike.

The clarity of Maulana Azad's vision was derived from the

balance and sobriety of his judgment. So long as a man is rational, and judges things in the light of reason, he cannot err. Mistakes in politics as elsewhere occur only when prejudices sway the balance and prevent us from weighing the different elements in the situation before us. His sobriety and clarity of judgment gave Maulana Azad's political decisions a kind of impersonality which awed friends and disconcerted opponents. This also explains why the bitterest controversies did not evoke from him one word of anger, indignation or indictment against those who took every opportunity of trying to insult and humiliate him. In the midst of storm and conflict he remained unperturbed. This discipline developed in him a tremendous personality whose power was felt by everyone who came into contact with him.

It was during the session of the Ramgarh Congress that I had my first close contact with Maulana Azad. On the eve of the Congress, he invited me to come as his guest. I was completely taken aback by this kindness as I was then a comparative stranger to him, but soon I had fresh evidence of his magnanimous and generous spirit. I will never forget the two or three days I spent in his camp. During breakfast, lunch and dinner, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and others often joined Maulana Azad. The conversation was not restricted to politics but ranged over the whole field of human history and culture. It was a pleasure of listen to their scintillating talk and I was struck again and again by the rational and modern outlook with which Maulana Azad approached all questions. He was an ardent nationalist but what was still more important he was a humanist in the truest sense of the term. In the midst of controversy, he retained the detachment of the scholar and exhibited a toleration that was remarkable. Subhas Chandra Bose was then holding the Anti-Compromise Conferences as a challenge to the Congress and most Congressmen were bitter about it. Not so Maulana Azad. He did not say one hard word against Subhas Chandra Bose or the Anti-Compromise Conference. He made it clear that while he disagreed with Subhas Chandra Bose's approach and tactics, he could never forget that Subhas Chandra Bose was a true and patriotic son of India.

Maulana Azad showed the same spirit of toleration and

magnanimity in his dealings with the Muslim League and its leaders. They abused him in season and out of season but Maulana Azad was always courteous in his references to them. His nationalist faith was firm and he opposed the League's policies but he never attacked any of its leading personalities. As for the students and other young men misled by the Muslim League, Maulana Azad refused to condemn or punish them, for he said that they were less to blame than the leaders who led them astray. It was an instance of poetic justice that many of these men later came to Maulana Azad for advice and help, and needless to say, Maulana Azad always treated them with consideration and sympathy.

The question of popularity or unpopularity never weighed with Maulana Azad. He said and did what he considered to be right and stood fast by his own convictions. The way in which he resisted the blandishments as well as the threats of the Muslim League is well known. For many years, he had led the Eid prayers in Calcutta and thousands came to listen to his *khutba*. In the late 'thirties, a section of the Muslim League started an agitation for removing him from the Imamatus. Thousands of Maulana Azad's admirers resented this and pleaded with him that he should not yield to the pressure of a small misguided coterie. The more sober among the adherents of the Muslim League were themselves ashamed at the move and requested him that he should continue to lead the prayers. A large body of Moslems went to the extent of suggesting that if need be, there could be two congregations—one led by Maulana Azad and the other by some nominee of the Muslim League. Maulana Azad declared in categorical terms that political differences should not be brought into religious functions and he would not agree to conduct the prayers if this was resented by even a handful among the Musalmans of Calcutta.

Soon after the Ramgarh Congress, Maulana Azad was arrested along with other Congress leaders. He was released for a short spell after Japan's entry into the war, but all Congress leaders were again imprisoned as a sequel to the Quit India Resolution adopted by the Congress in August 1942. It is worth remembering that Maulana Azad had throughout this period worked for an understanding with the British. He sought a basis on which India could co-operate with the demo-

cracies on terms of equal partnership. He declared more than once that India's place was in the democratic camp, but it was British intransigence which prevented India from playing her rightful role. How could India, he said, be expected to fight for freedom and democracy for others when freedom and democracy was denied to her?

This was the last occasion that Maulana Azad was destined to court imprisonment. When in 1945 he came out, I went to see him with hundreds of his admirers. In a few days, he was going to Simla to take part in the Round Table Conference convened by Lord Wavell to discuss the problem of Indo-British relations. He had been in prison since 1942 and his health was still weak. He asked me to see him at his home and when I did so, he did me the honour of asking me to join his inner circle. He told me that he had read in the Ahmednagar Fort Jail my Maharaja Sayaji Rao Lectures about the unity of Indian culture—later enlarged and published as *The Indian Heritage*—and largely agreed with the interpretation I had attempted there. He then asked me if I would help him by acting as his Secretary during the Simla Conference. I readily agreed and thus began an association which lasted till the day of his death.

I had the good fortune of seeing Maulana Azad's work not only during the Simla Conference but also during the negotiations with the British Cabinet Mission led by Lord Pethick-Lawrence. Never was the quality of Maulana Azad's intellect more clearly seen than during these discussions. In his autobiography, he has expressed his great admiration for Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. According to Maulana Azad, Deshbandhu Das combined in him the vision of an idealist and the strong commonsense of a practical administrator. In Maulana Azad's words, Deshbandhu Das knew how to reconcile what was desirable with what was possible. The same quality was evident in Maulana Azad's approach to many of the problems which had till then bedevilled the relations between Britain and India. He steered a clear course between the two extremes of impossible demands and complete surrender. His capacity to find solutions that would satisfy rival groups and reconcile their differences had been exhibited many times during his presidentship of the Congress. The same ability was

seen in an even clearer light during the discussions with the British Cabinet Mission.

Maulana Azad was able to reconcile rival points of view only because he approached all problems in a scientific and critical spirit. In fact, I found his approach on most issues more rational and modern than that of many who have received modern education. Maulana Azad had never studied English during his student days. He learnt it through his own efforts, and while he acquired enough competence to read books on any subject, he never felt at home in the English language. He had no pretensions in the matter and frankly told Mr. Attlee during his visit to London that this was the reason he spoke to him through an interpreter. It is significant that with this background, Maulana Azad was yet one of the strongest advocates of the study of English in modern India. He recognized that English was for Indians the easiest source of modern scientific knowledge and contacts with modern political and social developments.

It is often said that the law of compensation is the law of life. We express the same truth by saying that Providence distributes its gifts to different persons in diverse measures. To some it gives physical strength and to others intellectual eminence. To some it gives affluence and to others fame and recognition. It is rarely that all these gifts are showered upon the same individual. Maulana Azad was one of the fortunate few to whom Providence gave in full measure all the things which human beings desire, and yet with a contrariety which is beyond human understanding, combined all these gifts with a sensitiveness and sympathy for human suffering which turned his personal achievements into an agony at the sight of so much folly, so much futility and so much hatred all around.

With so many gifts and such sensitiveness, it was inevitable that a man like Maulana Azad was lonely in spirit. No one who came near him failed to notice the solitariness of his spirit. Courteous, kindly and a man of infinite charm, he yet breathed an atmosphere of reserve which few could penetrate. He lived in his own world of thought, and out of his musings derived the strength to endure the giant agony of the world. With all his exquisite sense of human suffering, there was in

him a courage of endurance and an optimism about the essential goodness of man which sustained him in the midst of all his suffering. Essentially a rationalist, he believed that God's Will will ultimately triumph. This was his faith and this is his testament to the people whom he loved and served so well.

The Revolutionary Maulana

MOHAMMAD HABIB

The life of the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad marks a movement, resistless and logical, but with some inevitable turnings, from the Moslem scholasticism of the Middle Ages (quite untouched by modern science and philosophy) to the secular State of the Indian Union and the way of life it stands for.

The Maulana Sahib's father, Shaikh Mohammad Khairuddin Sahib, had migrated to Mecca and the Maulana Sahib was born in November 1888 in the Darus Salam quarter of the Holy City. His father was a scholar of eminence and also a mystic with a considerable following in India. But he was a conservative and hated all non-traditional interpretations of Islam, which he dubbed *Wahabism*. The Maulana was educated under his father's stern control. When Maulana Sahib was about ten years old, his father was invited back to India by his large number of disciples in this country and lived mostly at Calcutta. Even before his father's death in 1909, the Maulana Sahib had burst through the medieval shell within which he had been brought up, and came under the influence of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's writings. This phase did not last long. Sir Syed had ruthlessly attacked the Moslem religious scholars or *ulema* on account of their categories of medieval thought and their medieval ways of life. With all this the Maulana agreed. But loyalty to the foreign British power was also an integral part of Sir Syed's teachings and the Aligarh Movement, and the Maulana's revolt against a policy of political subservience was inevitable. There followed, so the Maulana Sahib insists on telling us, a phase of atheism or

unbelief in his inner life. The term atheism (*ilhad*) used by the Maulana Sahib is perhaps too positive. Still it is impossible to deny that he passed through an acute, though short-lived period of tension during which his old ideas were completely shaken and he adopted that progressive attitude which distinguished him to the end of his life.

In 1912, Maulana Sahib, who had plenty of previous experience in journalism, started with three definite aims his Urdu weekly, the *Al-Hilal*, which ultimately reached a circulation of 25,000. He challenged the traditional or *taqlidi* interpretation of Islam, and also Sir Syed's doctrine of political subservience. Simultaneously he attempted his own interpretation or *ijtihad* of Islam, which he later on explained in greater detail in his commentary of the Sacred Book, the *Tarjuman-al-Quran*.

A man who chalks out such a path must be prepared for the sacrifices entailed. Maulana Sahib was certainly prepared for all consequences. 'There are contingencies in the lives of nations,' he wrote in the *Al-Hilal* in 1913, 'when the will to live on the part of the individual becomes a positive sin and he can commit no greater crime than continuing to exist . . . But also during these contingencies the seed of self-sacrifice and self-annihilation bears the fruit of eternal life with the advent of the spring.'¹ And again : 'It is due to the indolence of individuals that the souls of nations sleep.'²

When the guarantee of the *Al-Hilal* was confiscated, he started the *Al-Balagh*. But the Bengal Government expelled him in 1916; all other Governments, except those of Bombay and Bihar, refused to admit him; and he settled at Ranchi, where he was soon interned by Government order. To this period of his life belong two remarkable works, the *Tadhkirah* and the first text of the *Tarjuman-al-Quran*.

Maulana Sahib has been attacked by the orthodox on two counts. First, he was a *ghair-muqallid* or non-traditionalist, for he challenged the accepted modes of Islamic thought, which had been twisted to justify Indo-Moslem customs. This

¹Qazi Abdul Ghaffar: *Asar-i Abul Kalam Azad*, p. 15.

²Ibid, p. 16.

charge the Maulana repeatedly admitted. 'Whatever my circumstances of life, I have always disliked defects and imperfections. Consequently, I have always hated tradition (*taqlid*). I have never tried to find the footpath of another but have sought out a path for myself and left many footprints for those who come. Owing to Divine Kindness there are many ways for man; the easiest and the safest of them is to search for a guide. But I wish to make it quite clear that in all my spiritual distresses I have not been obliged to anyone for guidance. . . I am under no obligation for guidance to any man's hand or tongue, nor to my family nor to any syllabus of education. All the guidance I have received has been from the Divine Throne.'³ And again: 'The greatest obstacles to the progress of the human mind are its traditional beliefs; no other power can bind it in such firm fetters. Also it does not wish to break these chains but preserves them as if they were jewels. Every belief, every habit, and every point of view coming from family tradition or early education, is regarded as a sacred inheritance, which it will guard with care but will never dare to touch. Very often the hold of traditional beliefs is so great that even education and environment cannot weaken it.'⁴

The second charge against Maulana Sahib was that in spite of being a Musalman, he believed in 'the truth of all creeds.' The charge is correct but it was often made with malice. The Quran is very definite about one matter. God has sent Divine Guidance for all people for it says: 'We do not punish a people till We have sent them a prophet.' The basic attribute of God is His *Rabubiyat*, which Maulana Sahib interprets to mean 'creation *plus* preservation *plus* promotion *plus* guidance.' Now at this stage of his life Maulana Sahib was very angry with Moslem theologians for interpreting the Quran according to Greek philosophy and science with inevitable misunderstandings. The Quran, he claimed, should be understood as the Prophet and the Companions understood it. They considered themselves to be the true heirs of all preceding prophets. 'We do not find difference in any of the Prophets,' the Quran declares. But in all such matters Maulana

³Quoted in *Asar-i Abul Kalam Azad*, p. 156.

⁴Ibid, pp. 205-206.

Sahib is the best exponent of his own ideas.

In writing to a correspondent, Maulana Sahib stated in the *Al-Hilal* : 'You must always keep in view the difference between a religion and the followers of that religion; they are two different things and must be kept apart. Two-thirds of our disappointments are due to the fact that we forget this basic difference. *We cannot take a single step towards the truth by starting from those ideas and beliefs, which are actually found in the minds of the followers of any inculcated religion.* . . Nevertheless there cannot be more than one path of truth. There were (seemingly) only two alternatives for the Quran; it could either affirm the correctness of the followers of all religions or condemn them all. It could not affirm the correctness of the followers of all religions for they were opposed to each other; similarly, it could not condemn all religions, for this would have meant declaring that the world had been always devoid of truths and the foundations of man's spiritual culture and improvement would have been overthrown. So the Quran chose a third path and declared : "All the religions of the world are correct, but their followers have deviated from the truth. All ignorance, opposition, differences of claims and conflicts of organizations, which we now find, are due to lack of intelligence and defective actions of the followers of religions; in the teachings of religions there is no difference whatsoever." If these differences between the followers of religions, which are not based upon truth, could be removed, then that which is true would be left with every religious group. . . This is that "unity in Truth" (*mushtarik haq*), the spiritual content of which is found in all the religions of the world.'⁵

And for another correspondent he wrote in the *Al-Hilal* : 'The difficulties you find in reflecting upon the Quran will not be removed till certain matters are clarified...Briefly, you may understand it like this. After the first generation of Islam, Moslem thought followed two different paths, the Quranic and the un-Quranic...By un-Quranic are to be understood all those ways which are based not on the Quran but on the thoughts and emotions of its commentators; this was the inevitable result of the absorption of Greek thought, contact with Iranian,

⁵Quoted in *Asar-i Abul Kalam Azad*, pp. 124-125.

Byzantine and Indian civilizations, and the commixture of Arab and non-Arab races. Every group of commentators interpreted the meaning of the Quran according to the forms and categories of its own invention. And slowly the Quranic terms, method of instruction, arguments, demonstrations, advice and orders came to have quite a different meaning from what had been intended. The teachings of the Quran are based entirely on nature (*fitrat*) and its simplicity. But learning and the arts are based entirely upon man's inventiveness (*wazi'at*), which in turn depends upon his efforts. As a result, while the devotion to inventiveness increased among the Musalmans, the capacity for natural emotion and understanding decreased. Ultimately a time came when the minds of men became so habituated to discussions on the basis of the categories of their own invention that they could see nothing great or important in its simple and natural shape. . . All matters were discussed entirely on the basis of the canons of sciences (*'ulum*) universally accepted at the time; but these canons cannot be absolutely true and the knowledge of various generations is not united in acknowledging their validity to the same degree. It is quite possible that a proposition accepted as absolutely true yesterday may become a matter of laughter today. The basis of religion cannot be laid upon such changing and inconstant foundations.⁶

And elsewhere : 'What a pity that the Quran wished to take us in one direction, but the world put it on its head and carried it to a different goal. Our Quranic commentators and religious controversialists were so lost in the *Logic* of Aristotle and the learning of the Greeks that they had no consciousness of any other path.'⁷

And again : 'One of the greatest causes of the differences and conflicts in this world is the unity of truth and the varieties of names and terms. Truth is one and the same everywhere, but it has various dresses. And our misfortune is that the world worships "terms" and not their meaning. Thus though all may worship the same truth, they will quarrel on account of differences of terms. One calls it *shahd* (honey)

⁶Ibid., pp. 125-126.

⁷Ibid., p. 127.

and the other calls it *asī* (honey), but there is no one to tell them that they mean the same thing. And the same factor is in operation from the great differences of religions to minor differences in customs and ways of life. If all the curtains due to external forms and terminologies could be removed and Reality were to appear before us unveiled, all the (religious) differences of this world would suddenly vanish and all quarrelsome people would see that their object was the same, though it had different names.⁸

And again : 'One type of religion is hereditary; continue to believe in what your father and grandfather believed. Another type of religion is geographical; a certain path has been chalked out for a part of this earth; everybody walks on that path and you walk on it also. Another type of religion is based on the census; the census-papers have a column for religion; get "Islam" written in that column. Another variety of religion is based on customs; a framework of religious rites and customs has been formed; follow them and do not infringe them in any way. But after eliminating all those items, something really religious is left; let us for the sake of distinction and honour call it "the true religion". It is the way to this religion that has been lost. On reaching this stage, the truth is revealed that the conflict of religions is not due to religion itself but the evil deeds, worship of external forms and the theological canons of the claimants to religion. True religions may walk by different paths but they will reach the same goal.'⁹

As to the difference between religion and science Maulana Sahib stated : 'Philosophy can open the door of doubt, but will not be able to close it again. Science can give proofs, but cannot provide faith. Religion can give faith, but cannot give proofs. For our life here below we require demonstrated truths, but faith is also necessary. We are unable to remain content with things that we have proved; we also want something which we cannot prove but which we believe in.'¹⁰

Maulana Sahib took up two very definite positions at this

⁸Address to the Bengal Khilafat Conference, 1920.

⁹*Asar-i Abul Kalam Azad*, pp. 210-211.

¹⁰Quoted in *Asar-i Abul Kalam Azad*.

time : that the Quran was to be understood in a natural way as the Prophet and the Companions had understood it, and that for this purpose the commentaries interpreting the Quran in terms of medieval categories of thought had to be completely discarded. In the Introduction to the *Tarjuman-al-Quran*, planned during the Ranchi period but not published till 1931, he affirms this with remarkable vigour :

‘The Quran in its framework (*wa’z*), its principles, its manner of speech and its ways of demonstration—in fact in everything—is quite independent of all artificial and man-made canons. This is as it should be. The Quran in everything has a natural method, unsullied by artificialities. This is the basic distinction which elevates the teachings of the Prophets above the artificial ways of secular learning and science. When the Quran came, the group of Musalmans to whom it was addressed were accustomed to this type of speech. They were able to think in the simple terms of nature and life’s experience (*fitrat*) for their minds had not been framed according to the artificial canons of civilization.¹¹ As a consequence they understood the Quran exactly as was intended. When the Companions heard any verse of the Quran for the first time, they immediately understood its meaning...

‘When the question about the meaning of a book is raised, preference will naturally be given to the interpretation of those persons who have learnt it from the person responsible for that book. The Quran was revealed to the Prophet gradually in the course of twenty-three years. As verses after verses were revealed, the Companions of the Prophet heard them, recited them in their prayers and, if they wanted to ask anything, they inquired of the Prophet. Some Companions of Prophet came to be distinguished for their com-

¹¹This is true, but in view of the character and maturity of the Arabic language (See *T.Q. Vol. II, p. 487*), the Maulana Sahib discards the theory of the commentators about ‘a quickly developed language’ and insists that the Arabic language had a long history beginning from prehistoric times and was the vehicle of mature thought. The basic difference is that the categories of Greek thought could never get rid of their governing class content and the categories of the Arabic language even before the advent of the Arabian Prophet were completely free from this taint.

prehension of the Quran and the Prophet himself has affirmed this. On the basis of natural reason—and not merely on the basis of “good faith”—the way in which these companions interpreted the Quran should have been preferred to the interpretation of later ages. But this unfortunately was not done. Later generation, in accordance with the mental thought of their own days, undertook new endeavours in interpreting the Quran and went clearly against the interpretations of the first generation in every matter. It was declared that “the first generations were stronger in faith but the later generations were more eminent in knowledge”. As a result the truth came to be veiled more and more with the passage of time and in many matters the simpler things were so confused that clarification became impossible...

‘The first period of Quranic interpretation belongs to the time when Islamic religious learning was not organized or written. The second period began with the organization of learning and the writing of books... We find that even with the beginning of the new generation, this (artificial) garb was being manufactured for the Quran, but its final stage came with the development of Moslem philosophy and learning. It was during this period that Imam Fakhruddin Razi (1150-1210) wrote his *Commentary* on the Quran and tried his best to veil the soul of the Quran in the artificially-manufactured garb. If the Imam Sahib had realized this truth, at least two-thirds of his *Commentary*, if not the whole of it, would have become useless...

‘This error was not confined to the Quranic method of demonstration but spread to every part of it. The controversies of logic and philosophy demanded various types of new terminologies and Arabic words were used to indicate these new terms. It is obvious that the Quran is not based on the philosophy of the Greeks nor was the Arabic language with acquainted Greek terms when the Quran was revealed. Consequently whenever these words are used in the Quran, their meaning could not have been the same as was given to them after the manufacture of the new terminology. Nevertheless, the new meanings were attached to these words in the interpretation of the Quran and many irrelevant con-

troversies were started like those appertaining to the first eternity (*qadam*), the phenomenal (*hudus*), the second eternity (*khulud*), unity (*ahdiyat*), resemblance to God (*masliyat*), etc. Meanings were given to these terms which no hearer of the Quran could have dreamt of in the first generation. Another fruit of the same tree is the postulate that the Quran must keep company with new investigations. Every attempt was made to interpret the Quran in terms of Ptolemy's astronomy, just as in modern times men lost to reason try to impose the postulates of present-day science on the Quran...

'The basic thought of every generation inevitably affects all its knowledge and learning, including its commentaries and interpretations of the Quran. It will always be a matter of pride for Islam that its righteous scholars (*ulema-i-haq*) never succumbed to political pressure and never allowed it to affect the Islamic faith. But the influence of an age does not come through political pressure alone; it has many other avenues for exercising psychological influences on the human soul. The articles of the faith and its religious act could be protected from these contemporary political influences and our righteous scholars have protected them. But it was impossible to prevent the human mind from being permeated by contemporary thoughts and attitudes, and it has not been protected from them.

'During the fourth century of the Hijri era, the period of *ijtihad* (new interpretation) came to an end in the sphere of Moslem learning. Thereafter, it is rare to find any scholar leaving the beaten path of tradition (*taqlid*). This disease permeated the Quranic commentaries also. Anyone who wanted to write a Quranic commentary first selected a leader to follow, and then walked blindly behind him. If a commentator of the third century of the Hijra made a mistake, it was repeated by all commentators till the 9th century. No one considered it necessary to part from tradition even for a few moments in order to investigate the real situation. Ultimately, Quranic scholars became so spineless that they could not think of anything beyond writing marginal notes on current commentaries. You have only to examine these marginal notes on the *Balazawi* and *Jalalain* to

find out the labour that has been wasted on merely white-washing an old building...Also if you take up any current Quranic commentary, you will find opinions of various commentators, quoted, but preference will always be given to the weakest and the most inappropriate opinions; and the best opinions, though quoted, will be completely discarded.¹²

This judgment, though severe, is substantially correct. Moslem religious thought, after a very great twist had been given to it, became more or less stationary. Alberuni writing in the time of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, made a declaration similar to Maulana Sahib's with reference to Moslem science and said that any further scientific progress was impossible.

The causes of their stoppage of thinking—or closing of the door of *ijtihad*, as Maulana Sahib puts it—deserve a careful examination. At the time of the death of the Omayyad Caliph, Walid bin Abdul Malik (714 A.D), Islam had expanded up to Spain on the one side and the frontiers of China on the other. It cannot be denied that the establishment of a unified system of administration was economically and materially a definite gain to the governed, and this is the primary reason for the succession of a series of mammoth Empires—the Omayyad, the Abbaside, the Ghaznavide, the Seljuq, the Khwarazmian, the Mongol, the Taimurid—till about the 16th century, when national movements appeared both in Europe and Asia. When one imperial dynasty fell owing to its incompetence, public opinion desired the establishment of a new imperial dynasty to take its place. A centralized empire could see to the safety of trade routes, which covered a journey of three or four months. Most regions in this area produced only a very limited number of commodities and were dependent upon trade for the bare necessities of life. Islam had given to whole region Arabic for its cultural language and the Moslem *shari'at* gave it the best system of private law that was possible for the Middle Ages. The great and small cities, which were the centres of Islamic life and culture, depended upon the security of roads for even their daily supply of food, for they were often very far from the grain-producing provinces. Many medieval legists were of opinion that 'the glory of Islam' was a matter for the

¹²The *Tarjuman-al-Quran*, Introduction, pp. 66-70.

cities only.

Amir Mu'awiya laid the foundations of two political institutions—a hereditary monarchy and an official or bureaucratic governing class, all members of which were appointed and dismissed by the occupant of the throne. A third institution—that of the State-maintained and State-subsidized *ulema* or religious scholars—was also established in due course. The relation of these three institutions to each other I have discussed elsewhere. But they were not known to the Quran and yet a Quranic justification had to be found for them by a series of 'pre-determined interpretations'. These interpretations killed the expansive character of the Islamic creed. But the primary problem of the Middle Ages was 'search for security'. Our best thinkers and leaders today search for cultural and economic security through planned progress of the human mind as well as its material environment. Our medieval ancestors tried to find security in a static and unchanging social order. If a ruling dynasty was overthrown by a usurper who formed a new governing class of his own, a limited number of families suffered but the normal life of the people was not affected. But it was otherwise with 'ideas' that threatened the social order. As a result of the struggle between the basic Quranic principles, the traditions of the various peoples who had joined the Islamic fold and their varying cultures and many other factors, which cannot be enumerated here, a sort of compromise was made. This compromise gave us the beaten path of *taqlid* or orthodoxy (*sunnat wal jama'at*); its basic principle was that Islamic thinking in all spheres should permit nothing new or novel, as everything new was a danger to the social order.

On this principle, held subconsciously rather than consciously science was prohibited along with magic, alchemy and the like. The 'reading' of the Quran was recommended, whether you understood its meaning or not; 'studying' the Quran for personal guidance and spiritual culture was declared to be meritorious; but 'commenting upon the Quran' by direct interpretation was considered dangerous. All authors were required to follow one of the specified schools which tradition permitted.

* * *

Novelty lay not in the condemnation of this medieval theo-

logical religious structure, which in fact stood self-condemned, but in what Maulana Sahib tried to put in its place. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was really a progressive revolutionary and a believer in true freedom, but he is classed among the *ulema* on account of his religious learning in which he over-topped them all. He was also a nationalist because he believed that the basis of the Quran was not theological hatred but humanity, and prescribed correct moral relations between human beings in spite of their different religions.

'For about twenty-three years' Maulana Sahib declares, 'the Quran has been the object of my contemplation day and night. I have devoted prolonged thought to every chapter, every verse, every pause and every word. And I can declare that of the existing commentaries (*tafsirs*) and other books on the Quran, whether printed or in manuscript form only, the larger part has been studied by me. I have not failed in investigating and studying any problems whatsoever which have arisen in the discussions concerning the science of the Quran.

'The ways of learning and investigation are now-a-days divided into the old and the new. For me this distinction has no meaning. That which is old, I have acquired by inheritance, that which is new I have acquired by my own efforts. I know every inch of the old roads, and the new roads are equally well-known to me. From the very first day I have refused to be content with what my family, my education and my society gave me; I have not been bound by the fetters of tradition in any direction, and the thirst for truth has never deserted me. There is no *conviction* in my heart, which the thorns of *doubt* have failed to pierce; there is no *faith* in my soul, which has not been subjected to all the conspiracies of *disbelief*. I have quaffed draughts of poison in all sorts of cups and attempted to collect prescriptions of antidotes from every hospital. When I was thirsty, my thirst was not like the thirst of others; when my thirst was quenched, the stream from which I drank was not on the public highway. After these prolonged investigations and search for truth, I have explained the Quran to the extent I have been able to understand it in three books:

¹³*Tarjuman-al-Quran*, pp. 75-76.

the *Tarjuman-al-Quran*, the *Al-Bayan* and the introduction to the *Tafsir*.¹³

Only the first two volumes of the *Tarjuman-al-Quran* have been printed. They consist of an Introduction of 76 pages, a commentary on the Opening Chapter (*Surat-ul-Fatiha*) covering 174 pages, and the translation and commentary on the Quran up to the eighteenth out of the thirty equal sections into which the Quran has been divided.¹⁴

In spite of the fact that it is not technically complete there is nothing like the *Tarjuman-al-Quran* in the whole realm of Moslem religious literature.

In the carefully composed review of the *Tarjuman-al-Quran* the late Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi wrote as follows: 'Moslem scholars have written many commentaries on the Holy Quran. Among what I have read, the best works are those of Ibn-i Taimmiyyah and Hafiz ibn-i Qayyam, and, from the viewpoint of literary excellence, the *Amsulus Sa'ir* of Abul Fath Abdul Karim of Mosal; among later writers there is no deeper scholar of the Quran than Shah Waliullah. The complete commentaries of Allama ibn-i Taimmiyyah and Hafiz ibn-i Qayyam have been lost; nevertheless all their surviving works are commentaries on the Quran...The fact is that Quranic commentaries are of two types. Commentaries of the first type are based entirely on the Prophet's traditions (*rawayat*) and narratives, like the works of Jair, Tabari, S'ualabi, Qarbat, etc. The second type is based entirely on reason, like the works of Abu Muslim Naishapuri, Raghil Isfashani, Imam Razi Naishapuri, Madarik, Baizawi, etc. But among the scholars of the past only Ibn-i Taimmiyyah and Ibn-i Qayyam have been able to write commentaries in which reason and the Prophet's tradition have been carefully combined—in which the Prophet's traditions have been correctly weighed and in which reason does not mean a slavish following of Plato and Aristotle...

¹⁴This Opening Chapter consists of seven verses only. Maulana Sahib's commentary on these verses covers a wide variety of topics. It has been translated into English by my esteemed friend, Mr. Syed Ashfaq Husain (who had the opportunity of studying it with Maulana Sahib), under the name of *Spirit of Islam* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958). Dr. Syed Abdul Latif has also brought out a translation, *Basic Concepts of the Quran*, which was undertaken at Maulana Sahib's request and approved by him.

'The author of the *Tarjuman-al-Quran* is to be praised for the fact that he has understood the spirit of the times, and has, in this epoch of European imperialism, courageously followed the path which Ibn-i Taimmiyyah and Ibn-i-Qayyam had chalked out for resisting the Mongol conquerors. And just as they, with reference to their times, had discovered the secret that the cause of the decline of Islam was slavish subservience to Greek philosophy, similarly the author of the *Tarjuman-al-Quran* has declared the present ruin of the Musalmans to be due to their mental slavery to the philosophy of ancient Greece and modern Europe. The cure he prescribes is that the Quran should be understood according to the precepts of the Prophet and the technique of these precepts and according to natural reason and philosophy...The author's translation is a commendative translation; so the name of *Tarjuman-al-Quran* has been given to it. It is difficult for one man to agree with another in every respect, but taken as a whole the translation is correct, agreeable, effective and dignified. The *Tarjuman-al-Quran* is a very important thing for our times: it should be carried to every house.'¹⁵

I have quoted this review partly because it is written by a really great scholar of the old, reactionary school, who deserted the Musalmans of India in their hour of trial, but primarily because it brings out the difference between Maulana Sahib and the most progressive *ulema* of the old type—the school of Maulana Shibli—in the most polite form. Fundamentally the review is not correct. This is not the place for discussing the Mongolian invasion, but the collapse of Alauddin Khwarazam Shah and his officers before Chengiz Khan was certainly not due to their addiction to Greek philosophy. Also, the advance of the Mongol armies was ultimately stopped by the Egyptian Berbers and Alauddin Khilji; the Moslem *ulema* bowed to Chengiz Khan and his successors got magnificent grants. Imam Ibn-i Taimmiyyah is believed to be the founder of that school, or rather outlook of life, which in later days has come to be called *Wahabism*. He suffered bravely for his cause both at the hands of the rulers and of the vulgar Moslem herd. Maulana

¹⁵ *Abul Kalam Azad*: A series of articles on the Maulana Sahib edited by Abdullah Butt on behalf of the All-Punjab Muslims Students Federation, Qaumi Kutub Khana. Lahore, pp. 82-85.

Sahib in his *Tadhkirah* writes page after page in praise of Ibn-i Taimmiyyah, but he neither explains his doctrines nor subscribes to them. Lastly, if the Sir Syed school erred to accepting modern science along with subservience to British imperialism, the Shibli school made an equally great error in trying to combat the achievements of modern science with theological weapons and keeping out of politics. Maulana Sahib has not committed either error. He objected to the interpretation of the Quran in terms of Greek thought, but to Greek philosophy, science, art, music, culture as a stage—and a very great stage—in human progress he had no objection whatsoever.¹⁶ Also Maulana Sahib at no stage of his career objected to the complete acceptance of European science in every field from mathematics to archa-

¹⁶See *Ghubar-i Khatir*, Letter dated 15 June, 1943, where Maulana Sahib after confessing his fondness for music—'I can live happily without all other necessities of life but not without music, for pleasant sounds are the support of my life'—goes on to express his regret that the Musalmans learnt so little from the Greeks. 'Arab authors knew as little of Indian drama as about Indian music. Alberuni (*Kitabul Hind*) discusses Sankrit poetry and prosody, but he says nothing about Indian drama. In the same way, the Arabs were quite ignorant of the literature of the Greeks and knew nothing about Greek poetry and drama; they just knew the names of Homer, Sophocles, etc. because they had come across them in the works of Aristotle and in Plato's *Republic*, but their knowledge did not extend beyond this. The definitions of "tragedy" and "comedy" by Ibn-i Rushd (Averroes) in his commentary shows how ignorant he was of these matters, for he defines "comedy" as eulogy (*madh*, praise) and "tragedy" as "satire" (*hajn*, condemnation). It is not clear as to how far the Arabs were influenced by Greek eloquence; it seems that they never thought this subject worthy of attention. Aristotle's works and his *Poetics* had been translated into Arabic and Ibn-i Rushd has included them in his commentaries. But Arab scholars were incapable of understanding the spirit of Greek literature and they were too busy in investigating Arabic eloquence to pay any attention to it. Aristotle's two treatises on the subject are based on models of Greek eloquence and poetry, which were unknown to the Arabs' (pp. 316-317). It is quite unnecessary to add that the Arabs also remained completely ignorant of Greek achievements in the sphere of architecture and of other fine arts. The point is that Maulana Sahib, instead of objecting to the study of Greek civilization by the Arabs, regretted that their study of it had been confined to a few aspects of it only.

eology, because they are things of universal human value. The remarkable vigour with which he directed our Indian Ministry of Education and Scientific Research in a progressive spirit is a complete proof of this fact. How Maulana Sahib could have got anything from Ibn-i Taimmiyyh or any medieval author I completely fail to understand. For Maulana Sahib's *Tarjuman-al-Quran*, while deriving its moral and spiritual tenets from the Sacred Book moves a world that is delightfully modern—a world in which neutrons revolve round the atomic nuclei and the Darwinian doctrine of natural selection is taken as granted. He is a scholar of world history and comparative religions, and both subjects were unknown to the Middle Ages both in the East and the West.

It is generally believed that the Opening Chapter is a summary of the whole Quran. In his commentary on this Opening Chapter of seven lines, Maulana Sahib gives an account of the basic principles of the Quran. Nothing like it has ever been written, but since two excellent English translations of it by Dr. Syed Abdul Latif and Mr. Ashfaq Hussain are available, I will confine myself to the main points.

Maulana Sahib's thesis about the 'unity of religions' may be defined as follows: (1) Belief in the existence of God is found in all creeds; it is the common inheritance of mankind. 'The worship of God is ingrained in the nature of man.' All religions teach the same truth. (2) The differences between religious groups are, therefore, only found in three things: (a) the varying insistence laid on the attributes of God, (b) differences in forms of worship, and (c) differences in religious laws. These differences are due to difference in time, environment and circumstances as well as the stages of man's mental development. About the existence of God, no one has anything new to say; the messages of the Prophets on this point are merely repetitions; also the nature of God is totally beyond human comprehension.¹⁷

Maulana Sahib quotes Sir Oliver Lodge: 'From the motion of the electrons round the positively charged nucleus of an atom to the motion of the planets round the sun, and so forth, everything points to a predetermined law.' But this

¹⁷*Tarjuman-al-Quran*, p. 6.

predetermined law for Maulana Sahib is not a mere concatenation of material causes and effects but a cosmic or moral law—or, in the terms of the Quran, the *Fitratul Lah*, the law of Divine Purpose. The world is Divinely guided. Before the appearance of protoplasm and of living creatures, there is a progress to higher and higher unities,¹⁸ but when life first appears, we are in a position to understand the process better. Divine Guidance, for which the Quranic terms are *huda* and *wahi*, is given to the lowest of creatures through intuition and instinct (*wajdan*)—the capacity to learn from experience and to transmit the knowledge so acquired to their offspring. At the higher animal level, Divine Guidance is given through sense-impressions and the capacity for thinking.¹⁹ To human

¹⁸*Ghahar-i Khatir*, Letter dated 18 October, 1942.

¹⁹It should be clarified that Maulana Sahib here means guidance (*huda*) in the extensive sense it is intended in the Quran, but which has been ignored by the commentators. The Quran, for example, in a well-known verse says that God has sent *wahi* (inspiration) to the bee so that it may seek its house in the mountains. Other verses are also quoted by Maulana to the same effect (*T.Q.* p. 179). 'Our Lord (*Rub*) has given everything its form and nature and then guided it (*huda*)' (*Chapter 20, verse 50*); 'He who has created me and then guides me' (*chapter 26 : 70*); 'He who has ordained and then guided (*huda*).' Very clearly the '*wahi*' of the prophets is only a developed form of the guidance (*huda*) given by God to all His creatures, through their instincts, sense-impressions, reason etc. Then referring to the following verse, which was addressed to the Quranish idolators; 'Is there any of the partners (whom you set for God) who can guide you (*yadhi*) to *haq* ? God alone guides (*yadhi*) to *haq*. Then is not He who guides you to *haq* more worthy of being followed than he who cannot guide and has to be guided ?' (*Chapter 10 : 35*); Maulana Sahib adds : 'This is an important principle of the Quran. Because the words guidance (*hidayat*) and truth (*haq*) have been used here, the (Arabic) Quranic commentators thought that it meant the guidance of *wahi* (God's words) and the 'truth' (*haq*) here meant the truth of religion. All Persian and Urdu commentators have followed them. As a result, the meaning of the Quranic argument has been totally lost. On reflecting at such places one is wonder-struck at the low level of the study and intelligence of the later generations, which prevented them from understanding the obvious meaning of the Quran. Since the idolators believed in God but not in the Prophet's *wahi*, the argument loses all meaning if God's 'guidance' is taken to mean the Prophet's *wahi*...The fact is that these writers never took the trouble

societies, who unlike animals are required to live according to a moral law, guidance is given through prophets or messengers of God. Maulana Sahib accepts the Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest (*baqa'i anfa'*), but claims a Divine Guidance for it; without the assumption of Divine Guidance the progressive movement of organic species cannot be explained. 'The law of nature's selection,' he says, 'applies to human societies in the same way as it applies to animal species. Just as nature causes useful species to survive and eliminates useless species, in the same way only those societies are preserved whose preservation is useful for the human race. The useless are weeded out. God says that this is His mercy (*rahmat*); had it been otherwise there would have been nothing to hinder oppression and disorder among mankind.'²⁰

As is well known, the teachings of the Quran are based on a progressive conception of human history, the substance of which is given by Maulana Sahib as follows : 'The Quran says that at the beginning all men lived a natural life and were not torn asunder by strife and hatreds. They all lived in the same way and were content with their simple lives. Then, owing to an increase in population, which necessitated an increase in the means of subsistence, various differences began to appear, and these differences led to strife, contentions, cruelties and disorders. Every group began to hate other groups and the strong began to trample over the rights of the weak. Under these conditions it was necessary for the light of Divine Guidance or *wahi* to be sent to lead mankind to the path of truth and justice. So this light was vouchsafed, and a series of prophets appeared to preach the truth to mankind. By the terms prophet or *rasul*, the Quran indicates all those leaders who have provided this continuous guidance; for they brought the

of finding out the various meanings and grades of the word 'guidance' (*huda*) as it has been used in the Quran...However the word guidance (*huda*) here does not mean the guidance of *wahi* but the guidance of instinct, sense-impression and reason; also *haq* does not mean the 'true religion' but should be taken in its dictionary meaning as life's correct path. (*Tarjuman-al-Quran* II, p. 179).

²⁰*Tarjuman-al-Quran*, p. 76.

message of God's truth, and *rasul* means 'messenger.'²¹ 'When we examine man's ideas about God with reference to various stages of his life', Maulana Sahib says, 'we observe a rational movement among them. It appears that there has been an evolutionary progress in man's ideas about God along with the progress of his material conceptions. There has been a gradual movement from the lower to the higher. It is difficult for us to unearth the first chains of this evolutionary process, for as we recede towards the past, the light of history becomes dim and the revelations of the prophets have not given us any details about it.'

²¹*Tarjuman-al-Quran*, p. 128. It is the essence of the Quranic doctrine that prophets have been sent to all peoples. In Vol. II, p. 215, where he discusses the matter in detail, Maulana Sahib refers to the following Quranic verses : 'There has been a messenger for every community, and when he comes among them, he decides matters justly and they are not oppressed' (*Yunus* : 47); 'We have sent a messenger to every community' (*Chapter* 16 : 36); 'Have we not given you news of the people of Noah, A'd, Samud and people after them, no one knows (all of them) except Allah.' (*Chapter* 14 : 9). The Quran also says : 'And indeed we have sent messengers before you; some of them we have mentioned and others we have not mentioned. (40 : 78). Only *messengers* belonging to the Semitic groups have been mentioned by the Quran.

ARUNA ASAF ALI

Were he to me one of a galaxy of leaders, whom the rank and file in a political organisation revere as sublimations of their smaller selves, I would not have dared to pen these thoughts. I was, however, privileged to come near him because of his strong attachment to my husband. In his scale of personal relationships a friend held a very high place. In some cases his friends enjoyed privileges denied even to members of his own family, and their number was severely restricted. Although I do not remember him defining precisely the meaning of friendship, I believe I am not misinterpreting him if I say that he was attracted to minds that generally responded as rationalists to the intellectual and social challenge of our age.

Maulana Saheb's association with my husband began, I believe, when he came to Delhi in 1923 to preside over the special session of the Indian National Congress. The bond that held them together had many strands. They shared a similarity of political beliefs, an impassioned attachment to the best in the cultural traditions of the Mughal age, both literary and social, and finally a firm conviction that Western liberal values were perfectly compatible with the essence of Islamic teachings. This perhaps was why Maulana Saheb chose to accept Asaf Saheb as a friend, and also his hospitality during his frequent visits to Delhi, right up to the day he joined the Central Cabinet. He felt at home with us, not because we could offer him the amenities of a prosperous home. What drew him perhaps was the opportunity for being with someone to whom he could turn for intellectually stimulating talk, his only relaxation and which he obviously prized more than physical comforts.

An incident that comes to my mind symbolises an attitude that was typical of him.

Often during the fateful and eventful years of 1930 to 1941 the Congress Working Committee would be compelled to hold its meetings in the months of May and June. Maulana Saheb was sensitive to the fierce heat of Delhi. He suffered more than others, and anxious to spare him the discomforts inevitable in the stifling atmosphere of our home in Kucha Chelan, on one occasion I suggested to my husband that Maulana Saheb should be persuaded to stay at the Birla House where some of his other colleagues generally stayed. Asaf Saheb was not quite sure if it was proper on our part to suggest this but nevertheless agreed. Birla House was also informed that Maulana Saheb would be staying there.

On my part I was sure that the Maulana would welcome the suggestion as the unbearable heat would have affected his health, particularly as we were not in a position to lessen its severity. But I was wrong. Maulana Saheb brushed aside the suggestion in his own characteristic way. When he arrived he entered our car and much to my embarrassment, asked to be driven to Kucha Chelan! We were naturally overwhelmed, but the meaning of personal values acquired a new significance for me that day.

Much has been said and written and more will undoubtedly follow about Abul Kalam Azad the patriot, scholar and statesman. But I wonder if anyone from amongst his friends and colleagues will be able to write about him as a householder. Some family biographer alone can enlighten us about his childhood, early youth and young manhood, because he was extraordinarily reserved about himself and more so about his family. Very few knew what he meant to his own people. But having come to know some of them of late, I have learnt that he was an affectionate and considerate guardian to all those who depended on him. Only, he broke their heart when he refused to accept parole during his detention in Ahmednagar Fort when his wife lay dying.

Judged by his personal habits Maulana Azad had a fairly strict code of domestic discipline. His was never the ascetic's approach to the things that make life livable. But equally would he frown upon extravagance and ostentation. In the

early days of our acquaintance I mistook his protest at the elaborateness of our menus as a courteous formality. Then I noticed that having failed to persuade me to give up wastefulness, he began restricting his meal to two courses only, ignoring the rest!

Again as a rule, in our Indian way of life, we are somewhat unaware of the virtues of punctuality. But when Maulana Saheb asked for his tea at 4.30 in the morning and lunch at 11, he did not mean that it could be 4:35 or 11. 15. Once I remember, something went wrong somewhere and lunch was served half an hour later than usual, and Maulana Saheb went without his meal. That was naturally the very last time such a lapse was permitted. At first it appeared to me that punctuality was perhaps an end in itself with him, a merely meticulous way. But soon after I knew why he insisted on keeping to his timetable with such strictness. His early hours were precious to him as he spent them in serious reading and writing. And so, he wanted the rest of his day planned in such a way as to make it possible for him to rise refreshed every morning.

A political leader of his eminence has to handle men from all walks of life. Maulana Saheb had to suffer fools as well as cross swords with men of great stature. But he would relax only in the company of those who were more or less conversant with the rich treasures of Urdu and Persian literature, medieval and modern history and theology. It was never very easy therefore to help him to relax. More often than not, it was a matter of his host and he sitting and talking for hours together. He wanted an audience of minds capable of taking in what he had to say and if, on rare occasions, we were able to invite a few such, Maulana Saheb's conversational brilliance, according to Asaf Saheb, would surpass his oratorical skill. As for myself, all I could understand as a very bewildered and ignorant observer from the wings was that for every quotation presented by others he recalled several more to the delight and admiration of those assembled.

He liked taking long drives, particularly to the historical sites around Delhi. Besides the known monuments, we would wander amidst the ruins surrounding them and he would recount legends that had grown around a particular bridge, mosque or house, and his companions would marvel at his memory, his

capacity for detailed observation. Once he expressed a desire to see Suraj Kund near Tughlakabad, and we set forth in search of it before sunrise. We lost our way but a shepherd boy led us to the spot. The Maulana recited a Persian couplet which said: Knowledge is not the prerogative of the lettered. Behind his expression lay an endless capacity for human comprehension.

At the risk of being personal, I cannot help recalling the great understanding he gave me in the hour of my personal grief even though politically I had drifted away from the Congress. One day he related a story he said he had read somewhere, and he wanted me to listen carefully. A poor peasant had an only son. He had worked very hard to enable his son to complete his schooling. After the boy's success in his examination he was sent to a neighbouring city so that he could start life as an office clerk, his life's ambition. One morning he received a telegram and thought that it must be from his son giving him glad tidings of success in securing work. But the peasant was illiterate and could not read. So he hurried to the village school-teacher to have the telegram read. The teacher shook his head, looked into his eyes and told him that his son was dead, that he was killed in a road accident. The peasant's heart stood still and he wept bitterly. After some time he calmed down and left the school-teacher's cottage. A little later the teacher thought he heard someone ploughing. He wondered who could have started working his field at that time of the night. He went out with his lantern to see who it could be, and he found the stricken peasant busy ploughing. Maulana Saheb said: "You see he had found the remedy for his pain, work".

Tolerance, to him, did not merely mean religious tolerance. He believed in the absolute right of an individual to differ and to hold whatever opinions he believed to be correct. But he emphasised the need for beliefs. So long as the ends were good and consistent with a rational code of ethics, and people who pursued them were also prepared to suffer for them, he tried to understand them, even though he did not necessarily agree with them. Once the Maulana sensed insincerity and sycophancy in any individual he turned away from him, and no special plead-

ing could make him alter his opinion. He was intolerant of cant and all that goes with it.

These fragments from a past have flitted back into my consciousness after a decade and a half. But partial amnesia has claimed much that should have remained vivid. In attempting to record them today I have in a very inadequate way attempted to sketch for our mourning people Maulana Azad's bright and human personality.

DR. KHURHSIDUL ISLAM

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is one of the most towering personalities India has produced during the last one hundred years. He may be matched separately by many in the fields of politics, oratory, penmanship, education, religion, rational progressivism, oriental learning etc. but a happy and unmistakable blend of all these qualities is hardly to be come across in a single person. He possessed a charismatic and multi-dimensional personality acknowledged even by the stalwarts in their respective fields. Through his powerful oratory, he could stem the tide of inimical public opinion and sway it to his own liking, and his writing could influence the minds of people patently hostile to him.

Born in the Holy City of Mecca in 1888 in a family of Pirs, he was brought up in an atmosphere of deep religious lore, sound classical scholarship and mystical overtones. Steeped in these traditions the precocious child grew up into a sensitive young man of extraordinary intelligence and learning. Had he so desired, he could easily build himself as a religious leader, a natural successor of his father who had a considerable following in India. But the young scholar chose for himself a difficult and challenging course and the future events proved that something big and different was in store for him. He made a mark for himself in various spheres to intellectual and practical life. Once he made a revealing autobiographical reference. "In religion, in literature, in politics, in the highways of thought, in whichever direction I had to go, I had to go alone. On no road could I travel with the canvans of the age..." It was no hollow rhetoric but it was a statement of facts. He detached himself,

from the traditional beliefs, and hated to traverse the easy path of life. In his autobiography (*Tazkirah*) he records:

"Whatever my circumstance of life. I always had a feeling against defects and imperfections and avoided tradition and commonly trodden path. Wheretoever I was and in whatsoever conditions, I have never tried to tread in the footsteps of others, but have sought out a path for myself and left my footprints or those who come..."

AL-HILAL

Not only his writing but also his whole life, stands testimony to what he claimed. During the first three decades of the century, he edited a number of papers—*Al-misbah*, *Lisan-us-Sidq*, *Al-Hijal*, *Al-Balagh*. The last two became particularly popular from their inception. *Al-Hilal* was the acknowledged medium of his thoughts on religion and politics. The Maulana was much influenced by the social and religious writing of Sir Syed which inspired him to think in terms of reform and change. Stimulated by these writings he was convinced that no community can flourish in the modern world unless it responds to the challenge of the new age. Consequently through the columns of *Al-Hilal* he urged Indian Muslims to discard the non-Islamic elements which they had uncritically adopted over a number of years, and which had caused stagnation. often inconsistencies, in their social-life. He repeatedly expressed his firm belief that deep and genuine religious feelings should awaken the true human spirit and therefore "to depend and fall back upon religion for guidance and inspiration is the most desirable way for serving humanity and religion itself, if religion appeared to cause conflicts in social and political life. It was because of misunderstandings and misconceptions perpetrated by the followers of religion. Again and again he warned: "You must always keep in the view the difference between a religion and the followers of that religion, they are two different things and must be kept apart. Two thirds of our disappointments are due to the fact that we forget the basic difference. We cannot take a by starting from those beliefs and deeds of the followers of any inherited religion. . .all differences of claims and all conflicts

are due to defective understanding and actions of the followers of religions. In the teachings of religions there is no difference whatsoever..."

Occasionally these liberal opinions provoked his uniformed, tradition-bound co-religionists and there arose a storm of opposition. But the intrepid scholar and thinker was neither daunted nor shaken for a moment. He stood firm like a rock for what he thought was true and weathered all opposition with prophetic patience. The same courage he evinced in the course of the long struggle for freedom of the country which he considered to be his and every true Muslim's religious duty.

The editorials and articles of the paper roused Indian Muslims against the British authorities. Early in the century it seemed to be a vain venture but Maulana with his resolute mind and pen carried on this struggle and soon it bore fruits. Be it the *Khilafat* movement or non-cooperation movement or the ferment of non-violence, he interpreted it in the light of Quranic teachings, and, therefore, believed that it was every Muslim's religious duty to strengthen these movements so that foreign rule might be overthrown, even if it involved the supreme sacrifice. He gave a clarion call that still breathes the fire of martyrdom.

"There comes in the history of nations a time when the desire to live becomes a sin and there is no greater sin than to live on. At such a time the number of those behind stone walls and iron bars increases and the trade of the manacle—forgers splendidly thrives..."

Whenever the call came, often unmindful of impending crises and tragedies unhesitatingly and cheerfully he courted arrest and imprisonment. Along with the other leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Mohammad Ali, C.R. Das, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Husain Ahmad and thousands others, he passed one seventh of his total life in British jails, but no hardship could deter him from expressing himself either in his writings or from the platform and his spirit and courage could not be subdued by any threat. He proved his determinations and beliefs unfalteringly, even in times of great distress. His momentous statement in his historic trial for sedition rings

with indomitable courage and patriotic fervour:

"If these declarations in the opinion of the court constitute a crime, then I admit that they have always occupied my attention. I uttered and repeated them before thousands of people. I even find driven to repeat them again before this very court and shall continue to repeat them so long as I live. Otherwise, I am acting against myself and stand condemned before God and the people".

True to his mettle, Maulana Azad showed this spirit of uprightness and independence in the still more difficult and challenging domain of religious affairs. He fostered the spirit of inquiry and rational exegesis and encouraged the trends initiated by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in the field of scriptural interpretation. The forward-looking Maulana also controverted several moribund verdicts given by the *Ulema* of the past regarding social, moral and cultural problems that had ceased to have any living relevance in the changing society of India. He projected a dynamic and contextually relevant view of the 'Shariah' which is essentially concerned with the removal of evils and establishment of positive virtue of good. With the changing conditions the social laws have to be reviewed; of course the guiding principles have to be derived from the Quran itself. Boldly, he argued that if the *Ulema* of the past should attempt reinterpretation and review of the scripture and tradition with adequate appreciation of the given ethos and milieu, the privilege could not be denied to the present generation of theologians and thinkers. Understandably, his progressive outlook antagonised the orthodox traditionalists, and sometimes took even a virulent form which did not allow his rational way of thinking to strike deeper roots in the community. His approach and style of thinking was certainly much ahead of his times.

Hindu-Muslim Unity

Another theme which Maulana Sahib dwelt upon repeatedly was the Hindu-Muslim unity. He believed that the problems of the country could not be solved without this unity. Total inde-

pendence of the country was certainly his cherished aim, but Hindu-Muslim unity was still dearer to him. Happily during the Khilafat movement the spirit of complete unity and communal harmony was in evidence everywhere. But the bonds began to loosen soon. Addressing a meeting of *Majlise Khilafat* he said, 'For India, for the freedom of India, and the performing the acts of truth and dutifulness, Hindu-Muslim unity and harmony is essential. Unluckily, however, soon the voice of sanity and passionate humanism was lost in the gathering storm of communal bickering and bitterness which shocked every sensible Indian, particularly leaders like Maulana Azad and Mahatma Gandhi. In 1923 Maulana Saheb vehemently stressed the need of unity and addressing the Congress session he reaffirmed: 'If an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim from the heights of the Qutub Minar, "Discard Hindu-Muslim unity and within 24 hours Swaraj is yours" I will refuse Swaraj but will not budge an inch from my stand. If Swaraj is delayed it will affect only India, while the end of our unity will be a loss to the entire human world". But it was unfortunate that his dreams were shattered and the designs of the Imperialists succeeded tearing to shreds, at least for the time-being the texture of national unity.

Unique prose style

All his writings are characterized by a unique and inimitable prose style which is a blend of rhetoric and eloquence. As in other walks of life, he carved his own course in his writings also. His wit and lofty idealism are manifest everywhere. His exquisite idiom, clarity of ideas, forth-right reasoning and flawless artistry, poetry rivalling cadence give a peculiar and unforgettable flavour to his prose. Words and phrases follow one another in a majestic sway. His commentary on Quran (*Tarjumanul Quran*), his letters (*Ghubar-e-Khatir* and *Karavan-e-Khayat*), his autobiography (*Tazkirah*), his speeches and addresses, his articles on religious problems, each in its own right constitutes a veritable and hitherto unheard symphony or sense and sound.

Multi-faceted splendour—that is how one may describe the Maulana's genius and none who ever came into contact with

him could remain unaffected by it. His early education and training was in theology and Islamic lore. But his unquenchable thirst for knowledge and learning took him to unwonted regions of study. As early as in 1904 when he was hardly 16, he astounded the elderly scholars with his erudition and few could believe that the thoughtful contribution to his paper *Lisan-us-Sidq* were the work of so young a writer. With the growing age, he acquired increasing mastery of varied branches of learning. Whether it was literature or religion, philosophy or logic, politics or science and whether of the East or of the West, he showed perfect familiarity with them.

In spite of his profound scholarship, and hardships of life that sometimes narrow down the interests and sympathies of leaders and men of letters, Maulana Saheb retained his catholicity of vision and innate large-heartedness. The hostility of a large number of his co-religionists is no secret, but he treated even his detractors with generosity and repaid malice with magnanimity.

For a number of years he served as President of the All-India Congress Committee, and steered its affairs with consummate skill during the crucial days of Cripps Mission and the historic Simla Talks preceding the Independence. In January 1947 he was made the Minister of Education and died, in harness on February 22, 1958. This was the period when the destinies of the country were in the making and education had to play the most important role. Under his leadership and powerful personality the Ministry met the challenges and under his stewardship rapid expansion took place in all fields of education, particularly on the technical side. Maulana always stressed the need of coordinated efforts and unity of purpose. Various Commissions were set up to examine the educational requirements and the possibilities to achieve them, and it was mainly due to his vision and efforts that educational planning was set on a sound footing in the country.

A genius

In Maulana we had a versatile genius, a growing embodiment of our composite culture and an emblem of all that is the best in our traditions. He was an ardent spokesman of modern

thinking, a selfless fighter of the freedom movement and a visionary. But his thought and works are not merely the prized pieces of our recent history, they have a living relevance even today and are a rewarding study indeed.

Maulana Azad's Message to Indian Muslims

ZIFA-UL-HASAN FAROOQ

It is needless to recount the intellectual merits and personal qualities of Maulana Azad who is well known to all Indians as a national leader and as a peerless writer of Urdu. But I would like to draw attention to the composite personality of Maulana Azad, which, whenever it became active, opened new vistas for life and mind and thus paved the way for a better change. Such a man tries to fulfil the healthy demands of life; and his enthusiasm for action is always guided by wisdom and maturity of thought. On the whole he moves to a positive goal with a certitude that never fails. I wish you to keep this specific quality of Maulana Azad in mind while reading these lines.

The second quality of Maulana Azad was his deep studies in religion, philosophy, literature and world history, which created a historical sense in him and it dawned on him that higher moral and cultural values had never been the monopoly of one nation (or group of people) but every civilized nation of the world had contributed to their furtherance, as much as it could. And he believed that this legacy is still continuing. As a result of this historical sense a sort of humanism had developed in him, which reminded us of the great humanists of the period of the Renaissance in Europe.

An Indian and a Muslim

Maulana Azad was an Indian Muslim. That is, he was an Indian as well as a Muslim. He thought, spoke and wrote a

great deal. Here the writer would like to present and interpret his views only on two aspects:

1. His ideas which run round the Indian nation composed of men of different faiths, cultures and languages. Their continuous local intimacy with each other has evolved a common culture and thus the concept of one nation has become meaningful.

2. His views which are apparently related to Islam and its followers but have its underlying threads connected with the nation and the country. Because, if one community adopts a rigid and indecisive attitude to religious matters or falls victim to separatism and obscurantism, there would always be an imbalance in national progress.

The question of Nationalism and Patriotism has always been a debatable subject among the Muslims. The views of the majority of Muslims during the days when this question had occupied the minds of their leaders were epitomized in the following line by Iqbal.

"Jo peerahan iska hai woh Mazhab ka Kafan hai" "Its shirt is the shroud of religion" (Islam)

The stand which the Maulana took in this regard during the glamorous days of the League's leadership was totally opposed to that of the Muslim majority. We must keep in mind that the terrorist movement in Bengal had played a significant role in the formation of Maulana Azad's political attitude.

With revolutionaries

He has described his association with the revolutionaries of Bengal in his book, *India Wins Freedom*. I would like to bring in certain relevant extracts from it.

"In those days the revolutionary groups were recruited exclusively from the Hindu middle classes. In fact all the revolutionary groups were then actively anti-Muslim. They saw that the British Government was using the Muslims against India's political struggle and the Muslims were playing the Government's game.

"The revolutionaries felt that the Muslims were an obstacle

to the attainment of India's freedom and must like other obstacles be removed. When Shyam Sunder Chakravarty introduced me to other revolutionaries and my new friends found that I was willing to join them, they were greatly surprised. At first they did not fully trust me and tried to keep me outside their inner councils. In course of time, they realised their mistake and I gained their confidence. I began to argue with them that they were wrong in thinking that Muslims as a community were their enemies. I told them that they should not generalise from their experience of a few Muslim officers in Bengal. In Egypt, Iran and Turkey the Muslims were engaged in revolutionary activities for the achievement of democracy and freedom. The Muslims of India would also join in the political struggle if we worked among them and tried to win them as our friends. I also pointed out that active hostility, or even the indifference of Muslims would make the struggle for political liberty much more difficult. We must, therefore, make every effort to win the support and friendship of the community.

"I would not at first convince my revolutionary friends about the correctness of my diagnosis. But in course of time some of them came round to my point of view. During this period I had also started to work among Muslims and found that there was a group of young men ready to take up new political tasks".

Nationalism in Islam

This incident took place before he went abroad for the first time. It is evident from this extract that Maulana Azad was strongly opposing the friendly policy of the Aligarh Party towards the Government. He knew it well that the task of liberating India would be more difficult without the help and co-operation of the Muslims. We are all aware of the fact that the task of preserving freedom is harder than that of its achievement. Hence one can appeal today, in the name of Maulana Azad, to the Hindu Revivalist Movements to keep the Muslim community along with them in the task of national development, provided they want to make the freedom of the country more useful and meaningful. It is not possible to ignore the feeling of a community of more than sixty millions. If it is done, it will

be done at the cost of our national honour.

I am afraid I have drifted away from the subject. The problem which we are supposed to discuss is that of nationalism in Islam. Maulana Azad went on a tour of Islamic countries in 1908. There he was introduced to the revolutionaries who acquainted him with the political and the cultural movements of their lands. He met several revolutionary leaders of these Islamic countries and exchanged his views with them. He returned to India with a firm political belief that the Indian Muslims should not only support their co-patriots but they must organise their resources to liberate their country. We know that he brought out *Al Hilal* soon after his return from abroad. His basic aim was to bring political awakening among the Muslims and prepare them to fight against the imperialists. It is obvious that in those days this object could be achieved only through religious and cultural revival. It was the time of his youth and one finds that sometimes his thoughts were infested with romantic fervour. Even then, his religious refrain was more persuasive and convincing than those of others, "that Islam does not tolerate slavery at any cost. The Muslims were not only called upon to fight against the imperialists as Indians, it was their religious duty also to cut off the shackles of slavery and declare themselves free". The force of this argument lasted till the life of the Khilafat Movement and the Non-Cooperation Movement.

As these movements stopped and people were diverted from the active roles, the question of nationalism arose again and various views started pouring into the press. Maulana Azad wrote, "As the period of active role is over the time of nullifying the action has set in. The same action which had enjoyed the popular support a few days ago has become a controversial subject. Imagination and fancy started dealing with it as they liked. When thousands of people were going to prison so that justice might be done to Turkey, no one thought for a moment whether such a deep involvement was inharmonious with Indian nationalism. But this question has occupied every mind now. On the one side, there are people who are adversely criticising this phenomenon. On the other side there are Muslim writers who are also confused because the facts are not clear to them. There are others who had seen in the pages of the past issues of

Al-Hilal such controversies, as Islam does not tolerate the narrow concept of nationalism. As they are blind to the context and occasion, they think that Islam is opposed to nationalism and no Muslim should become a nationalist. But this is not the meaning of Islam's broad vision that it does not harmonize with nationalism, nor is it necessary for nationalists to contract the width of Islamic mind. Both are exceeding the one or the other limit. As in all other matters, we must try to find the solution in the middle, not on the sides".

In 1940, he strongly expressed himself on this issue in a very strong and resounding tone; he said, "I am a Muslim and I am proud to feel that I am a Muslim, and have inherited the glorious traditions of the last thirteen hundred years of Islam. I am not ready to allow even the smallest part of it to become dead: its education, its history, its arts and sciences and its culture is my wealth; it is my duty to safeguard it. As a Muslim I possess a special entity within the limits of my religion and culture and cannot tolerate any interference in this regard. But along with all these feelings I have one more feeling which the spirit of Islam allows me to have, and more than this, it shows me light in this respect: I proudly feel that I am an Indian; and I am a part of the indivisible composite nationalism of India; I am a significant element of this composite nationalism without which the structure of the greatness of India remains incomplete; I am an inevitable element of its constitution and I can never renounce this claim of mine".

Home of diversities

In the present circumstances I believe that a patriot Muslim should take the same stand which Maulana Azad held. Apart from Muslims, religious minorities, specially Christians, should also take this stand firmly and the Hindu majority should consolidate the unity of India by accepting this real sentiment as a historical truth. In the words of Maulana Azad, "Nature had decreed that this land shall be the home of different races, religions and cultures". The revivalist movements cannot change this will of Nature, but their activities can damage the unity of India and frustrate the efforts of national integration. The Muslims should also accept this decree of Nature wholeheartedly

and should not dream of that past which cannot be revived. Common living with the Hindu majority has become their fate; the structure which has emerged cannot be destroyed. Now, their interest lies with secular democratic and socialistic forces. They must come forward with determination to strengthen such groups of people who are fighting for democracy and socialism. Such a step from their side will strengthen the theory of one composite nation. They will have to give up their separatist tendency and they should come forward to fight all the forces which are driving the nation to decay.

One thousand years have passed since Muslims came to establish a relation with India and, in course of time, they settled down and became a part of the nation. But there is hardly any example to show that during the past Hindus or Muslims, as groups, had ever made any sincere effort to understand the religion of each other. It pains me to say this, but this I genuinely feel.

Social and cultural exchanges have taken place between the Hindus and Muslims and a common pattern of life has been emerging and vanishing. But no conscious effort was ever made for mutual reconciliation and adjustment exclusively on an intellectual level. This is the reason they could not agree to the resolutions and decisions taken by each other at crucial moments. The new generation of both the communities, which has grown up after independence is mentally cut off from each other more than its precursor. They don't feel any necessity to understand each other due to various historical and political reasons. This is a challenging situation for our united nationalism as it has been before independence. At present it has become more intense, hence more harmful.

Hindu-Muslim unity

We get light from Maulana Azad in this regard, too. He says, "Hindu Muslim unity has definitely become stronger than what I had expected in 1911, but it has not yet achieved the dependable level. I am afraid that in the minds of Hindus and Muslims their present unity is governed by political expediency. But I believe that no genuine barrier lies in this way provided they remove misunderstanding about each other's point of view. It pains me a great deal when I find an Indian trying to memo-

rise the history and literature of England and America, but he never cares to understand the religion and the community which has been living for centuries next to his door”.

Unfortunately, during the days of political dependence, the foreign rulers succeeded in creating misunderstanding among Hindus and Muslims; they distorted historical facts to achieve their goal. The success of their design created many writers in both the communities who wrote articles and books in the name of language and culture which gave strength to revivalist tendency. They presented their own history in a romantic manner. The result was a wider gulf between these two communities and even today much acrimony has poured in the name of language and culture. The text-books of Indian history prescribed for our students are written with certain bias and they present historical facts in such a manner that their study creates misunderstanding and our school children gather that there is nothing as a multi-culture in India.

On Indian history

Maulana Azad had always warned against the danger of such a situation. He had written a pamphlet in 1939 called *National Tahreek* but it could not be published. Abid Raza Bedar's recent book, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, contains some extracts from it. Before reproducing those extracts here I would like to reiterate the views of Maulana Azad on Indian history which is very simple. He thought that our history should be rewritten with complete impartiality. During the sessions of the Historical Records Commission he used to remind the historians of their duty. And, probably, in 1951, he had said, “The history written during the English period cannot be considered reliable. The historians whether they were supporters of the foreigners or they were patriots they have never been impartial. Therefore, it is the duty of the historians of free India to discharge these responsibilities as sincerely as they can”. Here is an excerpt from the manuscript of *National Tahreek* which contains his view on culture. He says, “If Sampooranandji, while addressing the U.P. assembly, has said that he does not want any distinction between the Hindu and the Muslim education, nor he would like to see any cultural distinction between the Hindus and the

Muslims, he has definitely presented a policy which can never be acceptable to Muslims. This is neither the aim of the Congress nor the Muslims will ever agree to the policy that the distinctive quality of Muslim education and culture should be completely eliminated from India.

"The resolution giving protection to minorities, which was passed in Karachi Session in 1931 assures to protect the distinctive status of the Muslims.

"For further confirmation of this Karachi resolution, the resolution which was passed in the Calcutta Session of A.I.C.C. was drafted by me. Later Pandit Nehru made certain amendments in it. Moving a step forward, it has been said therein that we not only want to protect the scripts, the languages and the cultures of minorities but we will encourage their development. This resolution makes it clear that the Congress does not aim at the absorption of the distinctive characteristics of the Muslims community into the composite nationalism. The Muslims must declare boldly that they are not prepared to be absorbed into Hinduism even for a moment. They will not only protect their characteristics as Muslims but will try for their development".

Not hostages

One can say that these views are outdated; conditions have changed; Muslims have been divided and they have got their rights. But, this sort of thinking goes rightly against the ideals of democracy, socialism and secularism. Our National constitution itself stands against such ideas. The position of Muslims in India and of Hindus in Pakistan is not that of hostages. They must get their rights in a democracy. The policy of keeping hostages was the outcome of the selfish and the narrow-minded leadership of the League. How can one accept such a savage and inhuman policy?

Taking the views of Maulana Azad, regarding the religious reforms among Muslims into consideration, we must find out the factors which obliged him to take a path which was markedly different from traditional ways. In my opinion it was his inquisitive nature which impelled him, in the beginning, to question the validity of his hereditary belief. Being dissatisfied

with the situation, his mind became restless and thus he started his search for truth. In the last pages of his book, *Tazkirah* and also in his *Ghubari-Khatir* he has mentioned it very clearly, His truth loving mind got some satisfaction in Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's rational and independent thinking. But its impacts did not last long. He reached such an intellectual height in his search for truth that Sir Syed could not lead him further. Ultimately, he succeeded in finding a clear and definite road leading to the desired end of faith and conviction. One who finds the key to the true understanding of religion after resolving the most confounding puzzles of his intellectual and spiritual strivings, will never follow the beaten track. He cannot tolerate inaction even for a moment; he sees life meaningful only in its continuous natural growth.

Role of Ulama

There are indications, and sometimes it is mentioned also, that Maulana Azad has been influenced by the *Salafi* movement of the Arab world, particularly in the days when the *Al-Manar* group of Rasbid Rida in Egypt had infused a new life into the intellectual atmosphere of the Islamic World. The deep reverence which he has shown to Ibn Taimiya in his *Taz-kerah* speaks of his disdain for the archaic and cumbersome, legal and scholastic arguments, and of his disgust for following the Islamic tenets without finding their relevance to times. He was a lover of the simplicity and dynamism of Islam in its early period. He wanted the Ulama who were holding the responsibility of moral and spiritual education of Muslims to realise that real Islam was not what they had thought it to be. He told them that Nizamiya pattern of Muslim education had lost its relevance in modern times. He was also dissatisfied with the moral conditions of the Ulama.

He believed that the Ulama of Nadwah appeared to be enlightened but a close contact with them deeply disappointed him. He maintained his convictions until his death that the syllabii of Arabic madrasahs must be changed as to fulfil the demands of the new age. The Ulama accepted his views individually because they had no counter argument to assert their views, but when they sat together to ponder over the con-

sequences of such a change they realised that it would prove ruinous to the interest of their families and their class. This compelled them to turn a deaf ear to any suggestion for change. Those who were sincere, they had no courage to renounce the traditional path. It can be well understood how much harm this attitude of the Ulema has done and will continue to do to the Muslim community. This painful thought remained with him till he died.

Evolutionary concept

I agree that no nation and community can cut itself away from its history and its past, but an undue respect for the past hampers its natural growth. The holy Qur'an presents an evolutionary concept of life. Thus we can say that the medieval system was against the very spirit of the Qur'an. It could not face the challenges of modern times, therefore it gradually disappeared from the Islamic states. The genius of Maulana Azad had rightly understood this reality and this is the reason why he devoted a considerable part of his life to the understanding of the teachings of the Qur'an and then in his particular manner transferred these teachings to the minds of thousands of people. There has been a controversy in regard to his ideas about the unity of din. The Maulana, however, claimed that he had never said anything on his own. He had only presented the simple and convincing teachings of the Qur'an according to his understanding. Truth is one but different religions show different ways to realise this truth.

Therefore, it is clear that conflict and contradictions are not inherent in religions but they are the product of the minds of their dogmatic followers. If people understand the spirit of religion they would become true worshippers of God and aspire for righteousness. When the value of moral good is more or less equally stressed in all religions, then where lies the cause of dissension. Whether it was a question of photographs or statues or of the evil which he called the 'devil of graves', he always took a reasonable stand in conformity with the true teachings of Islam. From this stand, according to him, the Muslim society could face the challenges of all times provided it kept itself alive to the changing circumstances from time to

time. He believed that if the Muslims accepted this reality they could play a distinguished role in the reconstruction and development of the countries to which they belong. This would bring in them self-confidence and would protect them from doubt, fear and indecision which are deadlier than the double-edged sword. Thus, they would be able to perform such prominent and epoch-marking events as their forefathers had done before. In one of his letters to the Late Sardar M. Akbar Khan he writes, "In this world communal rights and interests are protected by the strength of self-confidence and not by the fear and losing courage".

Determination and faith

In another letter he writes, "In fact from the beginning the disagreement between the time-servers and myself is not in the form but in the substance. The basic question before us is whether the case of the Indian Muslims should be based on determination and faith or on fear and doubt. I insist on determination and they on fear and doubt; the main point of disagreement lies herein. What is working beneath the surface is not merely political, but something more. The principles and beliefs which, from the beginning I have kept before me, are based on the spirit of the teachings of the Quran. I do not build up my arguments only on logical grounds but on my religious faith and conviction. I cannot admit for a moment that Muslims can move ahead in any direction, carrying the gloom of fear and skepticism in their minds. The light of religious faith and conviction is always available to them. But some time-servers are not aware of these fundamental beliefs: owing to this it is very difficult for them to agree with me on any point".

The harm which has been done to the Muslims of this sub-continent by these time-servers is before us. It is said that the great and dignified Muslim minority of this sub-continent is divided into three parts: in two parts Islam is in danger, and in one part the Muslims. But the field is not lost. The Muslims can play a historical role by joining the hands of enlightened and progressive elements of the country provided they are not short of determination and faith, and these qualities can be cultivated.

Stand up

Maulana Azad was neither happy to see Muslims becoming slave to the will of the ruler in the days of dependence, nor did he ever like to see them degraded to the level of beggars in a free India; and there can be no death for a community more painful than falling to this level. He wanted to see the Muslims very active. He wanted them to create an honorable place for them in future as the Muslims of the past had earned by adding glorious chapters to the history of India. Many years ago what Maulana Azad had written in the pages of his *Al-Hilal*, can be presented, after making minor changes in words and meanings, as his message to the Indian Muslims today. "What is to happen no nation can stop it from happening by force of its misfortune. Certainly, a day would come and all would have taken place what was necessary. Suppose, a history of national development is written at that time, do you know what will be written there about the Muslims?

"It will be written that there was a wretched and doomed community that always stood as an impediment to the progress of the country, a misfortune for the prosperity of nation, a plaything in the hands of their masters and a deep wound on the forehead of India".

God's will

It is a better reality. But it is there. I ask the Muslims to rise with self-confidence, faith and determination and ask them to give up the habit of withdrawing themselves into their ego-shells. I ask them not to pride on and be contended with the glory and grandeur of their past. I ask them to run to the fields where life is entangled with death, where truth is fighting against falsehood, where human and democratic values are surrounded by innumerable enemies. In this way they can work for the fulfilment of God's will. And this is the only way they can earn an honorable place for themselves in their homeland.

MAULANA SYED ABUL HASSAN ALI NADWI

It was at the beginning of my schooling or rather mental cultivation when Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the reigning litterateur of India. No other penman or poet of the country could, perhaps, have claimed that distinction in those days, for every educated person seemed to have been mesmerised by Maulana Azad's sparkling eloquence and forceful writings in the *Al-Hilal*. All those around me thought in the same way, and there were also several amongst them who were personally acquainted with the young Assistant Editor of *Al Nadwa*, who had come here to brush up his learning under the guidance of Allama Shibli Nomai.

The Nadwa was then housed in the Khatoon Manzil of Mohalla Gola Ganj. (This building later became the Lucknow resort of the late Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi). My elders who have had the opportunity of enjoying the company of Maulana Azad used to narrate stories about him, which spoke of his extraordinary brilliance and nimble wit as well as his self-respecting and dignified behaviour in a way that one often took them to be fictions of the old Greek philosophers or fairy tales of Arabian Nights. None of them paid any undue reverence to the Maulana, nor extolled him as a prototype of perfection; they sometimes even criticised him but everyone conceded extraordinary brilliance, strong retentive memory, self-reliance and stately demeanour to the Maulana.

I came later to know of several incidents illustrating Maulana Azad's sharp-wittedness from my revered teacher, Syed Sulaiman Nadwi. He told me that on several occasions when Allama Shibli was not satisfied with an article or paper he

wanted to be penned by one of his students, Maulana Azad would quietly enquire about it and sit down to produce the paper instantly which also met the approval of Allama Shibli. Often, Allama Shibli wanted the article to be written on some delicate philosophical or dialectical issue. The persons present on such occasions thought that the young man who had won the hearts of others by the gift of his gab rather than by his erudition was sure to expose himself on that occasion, but Maulana Azad always came off with flying colours.

Close association

Maulana Azad must have come, because of his close association with the Nadwa, to see my father Maulana Hakim Syed Abdul Hai. Once I found a visiting card bearing the signatures of Masih-ul-Mulk Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the manuscripts of my father. There are also a number of letters written by the Maulana to my father. There is another reason, too, for a close relationship between my father and the Maulana. The latter had been once in the company of Shamshul-Ulama Maulana Muhammad Yusun Ranjoor of Azimabad (Patna), when the latter resided in Calcutta. He belonged to the famous Sadiqpur family which had undergone great sacrifices for supporting the earliest anti-British-cum-revivalist movement of Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed. When the first Urdu book about Sadiqpur family written by Maulana Abdur Rahim Sadiqpuri was published under the title "*Ad-Durr al-Manthoor*" or "*Tazkirah-i-Sadiqa*", it had an introduction by an unknown writer, Muhiuddin Abul Kalam Azad. The old diction of this introduction scarcely suggests that its writer would one day be acclaimed as the finest writer of Urdu. Anyway, I do not remember to have seen Maulana Azad at my house. My father died on February 3, 1923, when I was nine and a half years of age, and if he ever came to see my father in connection with the affairs of Nadwa or the Khilafat Movement, I have no recollection of it.

First impact

So far as I recollect, I saw him first in the Ganga Prasad

Memorial Hall, Lucknow, in a public meeting which was held to impress the need of Hindu-Muslim unity. The meeting was also addressed by Maulana Muhammad Ali. I still remember a portion of Maulana Azad's speech in which he had laid great emphasis on the equality and brotherhood of the entire human race. He had told his audience that the Prophet of Islam always used to recite in his prayers, offered in the dead of night when everybody was fast asleep, a supplication which ran, "O Allah, I bear witness that all human beings are brethren unto one another."

When the time arrived for Maghrib prayers, the Maulana left the rostrum to offer the prayers in the north-eastern corner of the hall reserved for it. I also offered the prayer behind him and thus had the opportunity of watching him closely. Tall and well-built, fair with a tint of reddish hue, broad forehead, pleasing countenance and sparkling eyes, whose bearing showed a majestic mien—this was Maulana Azad. His dress was simple, the cap was a bit broader and he was wearing *Salem Shahi* shoes like the old nobility of Lucknow.

Old files of *Al-Hilal*

The old files of *Al-Hilal* which are now treasured as precious manuscripts were then available both at my Lucknow residence as well as in my village house at Rae Bareilly. Our elders used to ask us to be specially careful while giving them to us. This was the time when I had learnt reading and writing and I used to read avidly the articles of Maulana Azad, specially those written about the battles of Tripoli, Balkans, Adrianople and Smyrna. They described Anwar Pasha's feats of valour and in a similar strain was the Maulana's description of the martyrs of Kanpur mosque. I used to go through all these masterpieces of eloquence and ornate writings time and again and considered them to be the finest specimen of Urdu prose. I still remember his portrayal of a battlefield of Tripoli wherein Anwar Pasha had arrived to witness the dead bodies of the martyrs. The dusty field consecrated by the blood of valiant martyrs and the touching regard paid to them by the gallant Anwar Pasha, depicted by the forceful pen of Maulana Azad, always made me burst into tears.

Masterly style...

I had also read, somewhat earlier, his famous *Tazkirah*, which, despite its profusion of long-winded Arabic and Persian words and phrases, is as racy and fluent as a torrent. If any other writer were to use these grandiloquent phrases, he would succeed in producing an ornate yet artificial prose, but the Maulana's artistic use of Arabic and Persian phrases does not at all impair the fluency of his writings but rather increases its vigour and force. The Maulana brings in these imposing words and phrases in such a way that the reader is so bewitched by the sublimity, grandeur and sparkling flow of his style that he hardly gets time to pause and think over the long-spun words and their meanings.

This was his style, difficult as well as dangerous to be copied by others. Maulana Azad gave up this mode of expression later on, or perhaps the fervour of his style declined with the advancing age and experience, for he took to simple form of speech as can be seen from his Presidential Address to the Tripura Session of the Indian National Congress. Yet, he often took recourse to his old, fiery articulation which reminded one of the *Al-Hilal's* Abul Kalam. Then, in 1933-34, when I was teaching exegesis of the Quaran in the Nadwatul Ulama, the first two volumes of the famous *Tarjuman-ul-Quarn* were brought out. I read these volumes with benefit to me. The manner in which he has narrated the story of three companions, referred to in the Chapter of Repentance, especially that in the words of Kab bin Malik, who was one of the taught in the Nadwa and expressed his opinion about Arabic literature. He asked me about the subject taught by me. We asked for his leave after some time.

Maulana Azad came to Lucknow several times in those days. Once, the students of Nadwa even succeeded in making him pay a visit to the institution. How were they able to do is quite interesting. Among those few whom Maulana Azad held in esteem, the foremost was Nawab Sadar Yar Jang Maulana Habibur Rahman Khan Sherwani. The letters written by the Maulana in the Ahmednagar Jail which later on came to be published as *Ghubar-i-Khair* were addressed to Sherwani. However, Maulana Sherwani was in Lucknow in those days and was staying as usual at the Kakori Kothi. Maulana Syed

Sulaiman Nadwi and Maulana Masud Ali Nadwi were also present in the Nadwa but the boys knew that if Maulana Azad could come to Nadwa to see anybody, it could be Maulana Sherwani only. They met Maulana Azad and told him about Maulana Sherwani's presence in Lucknow but made no reference to his place of stay. The Maulana came to Nadwa.

I got the news of his arrival while I was teaching in a class. I hurriedly went to see him in the Guest House of Nadwa but found him sitting in the mosque, Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi and Maulana Masud Ali on his either sides, and a large number of students in front of him. He was complaining of the trick played upon him although it was a friendly complaint without the least touch of displeasure. He came to the Nadwa once again to address the Students' Union, *Al-Eslah*. He was then accompanied by Maulana Abdul Qadir Kasuri. I, however, do not recollect whether this visit was earlier or after the one just mentioned by me.

Arab: studies

The Maulana came to Lucknow again as President of the Committee set up by Dr. Sampurnanand for the Promotion and Reform of Arabic Education. A meeting was also held in a spacious hall of the Council House on this occasion which was attended by the teachers connected with the Arabic Madrsas besides the ministers and officials. In his speech the Maulana threw light on the evolution and components of the curricula of Arabic institutions. His speech showed that despite his political pre-occupations, he had still not lost his interest in the literary pursuits. He had before him a small piece of paper on which he had taken some notes during his air journey from Delhi to Lucknow. Those present in the meeting included Maulana Husain Ahmed Madni, Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, Maulana Qari Muhammad Tayyib and other learned scholars of Firangi Mahl, but everyone acknowledged the great sweep of Maulana Azad's learning.

I had the opportunity of meeting Maulana Azad on several other occasions. Once when he had gone to Kashmir for taking rest after his release from Ahmadnagar Jail, I also happened to be present there. The Maulana was staying in a house boat in

Nasim Bagh with Syed Asaf Ali. I went to see him with Syed Muzaffar Husain Nadwi. Although I had met the Maulana after a lapse of quite a few years, he remembered even the subjects I had told him I was teaching in the Nadwa. I presented him my latest Urdu work *Maulana Muhammad Ilyas aur Unki Deeni Dawat*, which had just come out of the press.

At Cairo airport

I also remember one of my meetings with him in 1951 at Al-Maza, the Cairo's international aerodrome. Maulana Azad was on his way to certain European countries on his first trip as Education Minister of India. Some of my friends proposed that since the Maulana was to land at Cairo for the first time, the Indian citizens present there ought to give him a reception at the aerodrome. I gladly agreed to the proposal. His plane landed rather late in the night and when he came out of the plane he appeared to be a bit tired. We escorted him to the place where he was to take rest and have tea. Egyptian press reporters were asking all sorts of questions in English and Arabic from the Maulana, who, while avoiding to go into details, was giving answers to their questions with complete self-confidence. He had not seen me yet when we came to tea table, nor, I think, he expected me there. He was talking to Abun Nasr of Bhopal who had since long taken up residence in Cairo and had also translated certain parts of Maulana's *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* into Arabic. He had once been directed by the Maulana to see my father with whom he had stayed for some time. He invited Maulana's attention towards me. The Maulana continued to talk throughout with us. He was expressing his opinion about the desirability of taking advantage of the new researches and discoveries in the exegesis of the Quran. His view was that one should be extremely cautious in citing the new discoveries in explaining the Quranic verses, for nobody could be sure if any new research accepted today would continue to be acceptable tomorrow.

The Maulana criticised the Quranic commentary of an Egyptian scholar, Tantawi Jauhri, who had freely drawn upon modern researches in his explanation of the Quranic verses. The Maulana also asked me if I had been to Yemen during my

present tour. Another question he asked me was about certain manuscripts relating to the life of Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed available in Tonk, about which he had been told by my father. In the meantime, the Indian Embassy officials were trying, albeit unsuccessfully, to divert his attention towards them and had even complained of the extremely short time available at his disposal. The Maulana, however, continued to talk to us till the time came for boarding the plane again. He was then accompanied by his Private Secretary, Muhammad Masud. I think the Indian Embassy officials were feeling quite embarrassed because of the Maulana's indifference to them in the presence of those whom they were accustomed to deal with the usual official contempt. I had myself had a similar experience hardly a few days back when I happened to visit the Indian Embassy at Cairo.

As Education Minister

I met Maulana Azad thrice thereafter when he was the Education Minister of India. On the first occasion I had been asked to come to Delhi by Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni who wanted to remind Maulana Azad about the publication of my father's work entitled *Nazhatul Khawatir*. Its four or five volumes had been published by the Dairatul Maarif, Hyderabad, which had given up its publication after the Police Action. Maulana Azad had come to attend a meeting of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama's Working Committee held in Gali Qasim Jan. Maulana Azad readily agreed to resume the publication of the remaining volumes of the book and when I enquired if he needed to be reminded again, he had assured me that I need not do so. The Maulana lost no time in obtaining the manuscript from Hyderabad and arranging its publication. I met him next in his office in Parliament House with Saeed Ramadhan of Egypt. The Maulana had a friendly talk with him in Arabic and asked him about the Majsumi Party of Indonesia. Thereafter I saw him last at his residence... at Akbar Road, New Delhi, with Maulana Imran Khan Nadwi. We had gone to see him about an affair of the Nadwa which was quickly solved to our satisfaction through his good offices.

It is not possible to throw light on all the different aspects

of the many-sided personality of the Maulana, nor to review his literary works in this brief article which has been written somewhat in a hurry. I have only tried here to give my reminiscences and impressions that I gained in the few meetings I had with the Maulana which might be of use to his biographers or other writers.

14 | Maulana Azad: A True Nationalist

SHASHI AHLUWALIA

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a profound theologian, keen intellectual, eloquent speaker, powerful writer and a sober politician. He was a devout Muslim and in his knowledge of Islamic theology he was second to none. He was a rationalist and believed that fate of India depended largely on Hindu-Muslim unity. For his rationalist and catholic views he was jeered and criticised by the protagonists of the two-nation theory but he did not care for such mean and unworthy attacks. Throughout his life, he remained a true nationalist to the core and worked for the freedom of the nation and its well-being. His faith in freedom and in nationalism never wavered.

"I have had the privilege of being associated with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad", wrote Mahatma Gandhi in May, 1940 in national work since 1920. In the knowledge of Islam he is surpassed by no one. He is a profound Arabic scholar. His nationalism is as robust as his faith in Islam. That he is today the supreme head of the Indian National Congress has deep meaning which should not be lost sight of by every student of Indian politics." He was the President of the Congress from 1940 to 1946 and also its President in 1923.

Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin Ahmed whose pen name was Azad, was born on 11 November, 1888 in the Darus Salam quarter of the Holy City. His father Shaikh Mohammed Kharuddin Sahib was a reputed scholar and an eminent Muslim divine who had a considerable following in India.

When Abul Kalam was about 10 years of age, his father migrated to India and settled at Calcutta. In Calcutta Abul Kalam joined the Dars-i-Nizami course for studies of Islamic theology and

divinity. In this school he was respected both by the teachers and students for his knowledge, learning and oratory. Azad visited the Muslim countries such as Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq when he was sixteen only. During his short stay at Cairo he was influenced by Syed Jamaluddin Afghani and Shayk Muhammad Abduh. The former had launched a powerful Pan-Islamic movement the aim of which was to liberate the West Asian countries from domination by the West, particularly of Britain. Azad was so much impressed by their reformatory ideas that he decided to inaugurate a similar movement in India alone.

At a rather young age Azad had mastered Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages. When Azad was fourteen he was tormented by some doubts about traditional religion. He continued to be haunted by these doubts for many years till "faith came to him but not through intellectual arguments, but as a deeply felt experience in the inner recesses of his soul". Azad wrote in Arabic ten volumes on Islam. He was a man who believed in the old ways of life. Azad's father had no faith in western education and never thought of giving Maulana Azad any education of the modern type. He arranged for the education of his son at home by some prominent scholars.

Azad took to journalism to educate Muslims to fight for the freedom of his country. He stressed the need for Hindu-Muslim unity. He joined as the editor of *Nairang-i-Alam* and later started his own paper called *Lisan-us-Sidq* (Tongue of the Truth). Azad impressed, the general readers and eminent scholars like Mohammad Iqbaq, Maulvi Nazir Ahmed, Maulana Hali and Khan Bahadur Abul Qadir by his writings. He was invited by the *Anjuman-i-Islam*, the premier Muslim organisation of Lahore to deliver the annual address on "The Rational Basis of Religion". This was a great honour for the young editor of *Lisan-us-Sidq*. Many people who had read his articles has expected Azad to be quite an old man. But he was so young that when he read the address many people thought that Azad had sent his son to read his address. They were really delighted when they were told that young man was no other than Azad himself. From that day onwards he was called Maulana or "Our Leader".

Eminent writers as Hali Shibli and Nawan Muhsin-ul-Mulk

said about him that he had "an old head on young shoulders". He edited *Al Nadwah* in 1905 and in 1901 *Vakil*, a paper published from Amritsar. The theme of his writing was that Muslims should take part in the national struggle for independence. According to him freedom of India would facilitate the progress and prosperity of the entire Muslim world. He refuted the ideology of the Aligarh Party. He was against co-operating with the British and separating from the Hindus. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had urged the Muslims of India to remain aloof from nationalist movement. Azad condemned this view.

To popularize these views he started a weekly paper *Al-Hilal* (The Crescent) on 1 June, 1912 from Calcutta. The paper created a stir among the educated Muslims because of his radical ideas. As a literary effort, it was a masterpiece in Urdu literature. His articles showed a rare combination of lofty idealism, rhetoric wit, and biting sarcasm. The editorials of this magazine gave birth to a new style in Urdu prose. Readers were captivated by the poetic grace, literary excellence and the presentation of a new faith. Soon its circulation shot upto 25,000.

Abul Kalam had assigned himself a task. The influence of Aligarh Party was immense over the Muslims of India. Moreover, the British Government supported the Aligarh Party with money. Abul Kalam was, however, determined to achieve his goal. He was of the opinion that there do come moments in the life of every individual and every nation when one can achieve uphill tasks. Such a time comes only after moments of depression and darkness. He said, "There comes in the history of nations a time when the desire to live becomes a sin, and there is no greater sin than to live on. At such a time, the number of those behind high walls and iron bars increases and the trade of the ironmonger splendidly thrives. Ropes hang on the branches of trees, and wooden planks are aloft for the sons of Adam to walk on to their doom. Such a day comes only to usher in another day, when seed sown by executions puts forth the fruits of a living and abiding life". That was the tempo of *Al-Hilal* when it was started and Abul Kalam wrote, "My resolve is not to seek a task, but to seek right men to do it. In this world, there never was any lack of tasks. But there has always been a dearth of men to undertake them. The present age is an age of

wars. All around us are hosts of enemies, and there is no lack of fields for action. Those who possess the spirit of a soldier and the courage of a hero must come out to face life as they find it and face its trials. I assert once again that there is no lack of tasks. What we really lack among us are patriots and fighters”.

Abul Kalam Azad took up the cause of the Muslim states abroad when the Balkan war started in 1912. The Christian powers of Europe threatened their very existence as the Balkan War was against Turkey so the Muslims of India were very much agitated. Maulana Abul Kalam strongly condemned European Imperialism. During the First World War which lasted from 1914 to 1919 the Muslim League and the Congress followed a policy of loyalty towards the British Government. But Maulana Azad did not spare the British Government for the atrocities committed by the Europeans. The British Government could not tolerate such an attitude on his part and forfeited the security of *Al-Hilal*. Maulana Azad started another paper called *Al-Balagh* which further annoyed the Government and it ordered Azad to leave the province of Bengal within a week. The Governments of the Punjab, U.P., and Madras were quick in issuing notifications prohibiting the entry of Maulana Azad in their respective provinces. Azad left Calcutta on March 30, 1916 and settled at Ranchi. There he was interned upto the beginning of 1920.

During his internment at Ranchi Azad started writing his famous commentary on the Quran entitled *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*. It is considered to be his masterpiece. It is a translation of the first eight chapters of the Quran. About this book Sayyed Suleman Naqvi, an eminent scholar of Islamic Theology, says, “It is a notable feature of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* that its author understands the spirit of his age and had adopted the same method of fighting the evil of We sternism, which Ibn Taimiya and Ibn Qayyim had adopted to dispel the evils which had sprung from the Tartar invasion. Just as they had diagnosed the causes or the downfall of the Muslims of their age in their submission of the Greek philosophy similarly the author of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* traces out the cause of the deterioration of the Muslim of the day in their blind faith in the Greek and European philosophy”.

The second book which Azad wrote during the internment at Ranchi; was *Tazkira*. It gives biographical accounts of his ancestors, and his own. Maulana Azad had written this book from his memory.

In January, 1920 Azad was released. A meeting of the Khilafat Committee was held on 28 February, 1920 in Calcutta. In this meeting Azad announced that if the British Government did not accede to the demands of the Khilafat, the Muslims would be forced to sever their loyalties with the British Government. A deputation of Hindu and Muslim leaders was sent to the Viceroy to apprise him of the sentiments of the people regarding Turkey and Khilafat question. But Azad refused to go with the deputation because he was of the view that petitioning and waiting in deputation would be of no use. This thing impressed Mahatma Gandhi and from 1920 till 1948, Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad remained friends.

Azad delivered a passionate speech at the Khilafat conference at Meerut. In that conference he placed before the public the non-cooperation programme of the Congress. In a special conference of the Ulema at Lahore, Azad was unanimously elected as the Imam-ul-Hind or the Spiritual Head of India.

Azad toured Punjab in 1921 to propagate Congress policy of Non-cooperation. He delivered innumerable speeches at mass meetings on this theme. His most notable speech on this theme during his tour of Punjab was the one he delivered at the Badshahi Mosque at Lahore after the Juma prayer in March 1921.

On 10 December, 1921, Azad was arrested at Calcutta and prosecuted for delivering two objectionable speeches in connection with the non-cooperation movement. During his trial Azad made a statement in Urdu which is considered to be an outstanding document in Urdu literature. He said, "I believe that liberty is the birth-right of every nation and individual. No man nor any man-made bureaucracy possesses the right of enslaving human beings. Howsoever attractive we may coin the names for slavery and servitude, still slavery will remain what it is. It is against the will and canons of God. Therefore, I refuse to admit the present Government as a valid authority and consequently think it to be my national, religious and

human duty to relieve my country and nation of this servitude..."

"I am a Mussalman, and as such, my religious duty is the same. Islam does not recognize any autocratic suzerainty, nor any beaureacracy which consists of a few paid servants. It is a perfect organisation of liberty and constitutionalism, which originated for the purpose of restoring their lost freedom of humanity...the freedom which had been confiscated by kings, foreign Government, selfish religious leaders, and powerful elements of the society. They thought that might was right; but Islam proclaimed from its very birth that might was not right; and right alone was proprietorship; and no one else than God was worth of enslaving or enthralling the human beings. It (Islam) swept off all racial and national gradations of distinction and authority, and showed the world at large that all humans hold an equal rank, and all possess equal rights. Superiority does not lie in race, nationality or color, it is only actions that count, and the greatest man is he who does his work best...absolutely nil for the desires and wishes of the teeming millions. It always prefers prestige over justice and truth...Its courage is indefatigable and its bravery is unlimited on crushing the sense of justice and there is no restraint to its tongue when falsifying the sense of truth".

Azad concluded his statement, "Before I end the statement ...I would like to say something about the Magistrate as well. Let him award, without any hesitation, the maximum punishment which he is authorized to give. I will not have any feeling of grudge or complaint against him, because my contest is against the entire administrative machinery and not with a specified part thereof. I, therefore, know that unless the whole machine is changed, its parts cannot change their respective functions.

"I close my account with the words of Italy's martyr for truth—Gardino Brono, who like me, was also made to stand before a law court, and who declared, "Give me, without any hesitation, the maximum punishment that you can give, and I assure you that whatever emotions you will have in your heart at the moment of writing the punishment orders, not a hundredth part thereof shall work in my heart while hearing the judgement".

"Mr. Magistrate".

"I shall not take any more time of the court. It is a very interesting and instructive chapter of history which we both are equally busy in preparing...while I got the criminals' dock, to you comes the magisterial seat, but I admit that for this work your seat is as much important as this dock. Come then, let us finish quickly this memorable act which is soon to become a fable. The historian is watching us and waiting anxiously. Allow me to accupy this place repeatedly and you may also go on writing your judgement with equal agility. This work will continue for some time more, and then the gates of another Court will open wide. That will be the court of the Lord where Time will act as the Judge, it will pass the judgement and that will be the final judgement".

This statement is generally known by *Qual-i-Faisal* or the Final Verdict and was made by Maulana Azad on 11 January, 1922, when Chief Presidency Magistrate delivered his judgement on February 1922 and awarded one year rigorous imprisonment to Azad. On hearing it, Azad commented: "Only one year rigorous imprisonment? But this is far too less than what I was expecting?"

After his release from prison, Azad noticed a serious rift in the Cnogress between the Non-Changers and Pro-Changers. He tried his best to reconcile the two opposing parties and was successful to some extent. Azad was instrumental in evolving a formula which was accepted by the Working Committee of the Congress. As a result of this formula all propaganda against entering the councils was suspended and those Congressmen who wished to enter the legislature were free to contest for the election. Once elected they were expected to non-cooperate with the Government from within. Those who did not like the idea of council-entry were advised to concentrate their energies on the constructive programme launched by Gandhi.

In 1923-24 when there was communal tension in the country Azad tried to handle the situation to the best of his ability. At a Unity Conference held at Delhi and in which about 150 Hindu and Muslim leaders had participated, he stressed the need for Hindu-Muslim unity. He emphasnized that the social order of India was based upon the maintenance of Hindu-Muslim unity and that Hindu-Muslim tension would harm

both the communities immensely. Though this Unity Conference had some impact but the communal situation did not improve much.

When the Simon Commission visited India, Azad toured the Punjab to propagate Congress decision to boycott the Commission.

The nationalist Muslim Party was formed in 1929. It was to function within the Indian National Congress. Azad was elected its President. The object of this organisation was to inculcate a spirit of patriotism among the Muslim and put up a united front against Muslim Organisations like Muslim League. In 1930, when the Civil Disobedience Movement was at its height Azad toured the Muslim majority provinces and the Muslims did respond and joined the Movement to win Swaraj for the country in non-violent way.

After the arrest of Gandhi and Motilal Nehru Azad became the acting President of Congress. He was arrested at Calcutta in August, 1930 for picketing and sentenced to 6 month's imprisonment. He was served with a notice in 1932 asking him not to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Since he did not pay any heed to this notice he was arrested again.

In July 1936, a Parliamentary Sub-Committee was formed to guide the Congress ministries in different provinces. The Committee consisted of Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Maulana Azad was given the charge of Bengal, the Punjab and the North-Western Frontier Province. For about two years i.e. during 1937 to October, 1939, Azad worked with great tact and aptitude in the Parliamentary Sub-Committee.

In Delhi he organised an All-India Independent Muslim Conference under the Presidentship of Allah Baksh, ex-Chief Minister of Sind. He openly denounced the partition scheme. He also denounced the claim of the Muslim League to represent Muslim India. According to him, 'It is a great sin to partition India.' He presided over the Congress Session in 1940 and remained in that post till 1946. He tried to persuade Mr. Jinnah to his new point but Jinnah refused to see him saying, "You are a show-boy of the Congress. Give it up." Maulana Azad was arrested on 13 December, 1940 and sentenced to 18 months'

imprisonment for making a seditious speech. Azad negotiated with Cripps in 1942 on behalf of the Congress. In August 1942 he was arrested along with the other members of Congress Working Committee and was released in June, 1945. He was authorised by the Congress Working Committee to negotiate with the Government and resolve the deadlock during the Simla Conference. But the Conference failed as Azad did not yield to the claim of the Muslim League to represent all the Muslims of India. In 1946 he continued his negotiations with the Cabinet Mission. He became the Minister of Education in January, 1947 and continued to occupy that position upto 22 February, 1958.

Abul Kalam Azad as President of the Congress and as a Muslim had warned against partition. He had pin-pointed "that partition would be a bitter-pill which will keep the two countries at loggerheads; and the condition of the minorities would be miserable." According to him, "Our national organisation had taken a decision in favor of partition but the entire people are grieved over it...If the right solution of the Indian problem could not be found by 15th August, why take a wrong decision and then grieve over it? I had again and again said that it was better to wait till a correct solution was found. I had done my best, but my friends and colleagues unfortunately did not support me. The only explanation I can find of the strange blindness to facts is that anger or despair had clouded their vision. Perhaps also the fixation of a date—15 August—acted like a charm and hypnotised them into accepting whatever Lord Mountbatten said."

Azad did commendable work as Minister of Education and Scientific Research. He was instrumental in appointing the University Education Commission in 1948 and the Secondary Education Commission in 1952. It was Azad who felt the need of and established various institutions and Commissions e.g., Kharagpur Institute of Higher Technology, the University Grants Commission, Indian Council of Cultural Relations and three national Akademies. The Departments of Archaeology, Archives and Anthropology were developed.

Azad was not a professional politician who would change his party to grind his own axe. He was a man of religion and he would not compromise with his convictions. Though he did

not believe in non-violence as a creed yet he remained a true follower of Gandhi. The followers of Muslim League heaped insults on him and called him "a show-boy of Gandhi." But this did not deviate him "from the path he had chosen for himself. His was essentially a voice of reason which was one of moderation and sanity",

Rich tributes were paid to Azad on his death on 22 February 1958: The *Hindu* of Madras wrote, "In the passing away of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India has lost a tried and fearless patriot, Islam a great exponent of true Koranic principles and the world of scholarship a gifted author and savant who knew no barriers of race, country or language. He warned Muslims against offending Hindu sentiment by slaughter of cows long before other Muslim leaders. He gave short shrift to those who were always bent on getting protection for the minorities. He was a trusted friend of Mahatma Gandhi and in response to the latter's call for sacrifice, he underwent various terms of imprisonment, making eleven years in all. The Congress showed its supreme confidence in his integrity and leadership by electing him President for various terms and he conducted talks with Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942 and with the British Cabinet Mission four years later. Both in the party and outside the Cabinet his voice was listened to with respect and his counsel sought on the most difficult issues. It was he who was responsible for the publication, in 1952, of an authoritative history of Eastern Philosophy and, again, for the history of the 1857 struggle for freedom compiled from the National Archives. Maulana Azad must also claim credit for the recognition and fostering of Indian literary and artistic works and for giving encouragement to our creative artists, who had been neglected by the State for decades. Through all his life time, he was an outstanding example of truly cosmopolitan culture and despite his arduous work in the political and administrative field, he continued to maintain his serenity of spirit and to seek a friendly and human approach to any problem." Azad never used his powerful pen or oratory for any but the highest purposes. His patriotism, his scholarship and his robust thinking were distinct assets for India and his death has come as a great national tragedy.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says that Maulana Azad was a great

scholar, a self-sacrificing patriot and a statesman. He worked hard for the unity of India. He was a devout Muslim and an ardent patriot. He suffered persecution on account of his views but he never faltered. His was a life of search and attainment. He was an outstanding figure of great courage, fearlessness and integrity. He was a unique figure in our political life for two generations. He made no difference between a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh or a Christian. He believed that all those who were in this country belonged to one country. The national spirit was the driving force of his life. He was an apostle of national unity and communal harmony. He had a civilized mind. Books were his constant and never-failing companies. He wrote an introduction to *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*.

Dr. Zakir Husain says that Maulana Azad "had a many sided personality. He was not only fighter for freedom and a great statesman but a great theologian and a great scholar. He was a great literary artist and possessed an excellent taste and rare aesthetic sensibility. He never gave up scholarship and literature for politics. To the last, he was faithful to this first love."

While announcing the death of Shri Azad in the Parliament Jawarharlal Nehru said, "It has become almost a common place, when a prominent person passes away, to say that he is irreplaceable, that his passing away has created a void which cannot be filled. To some extent that is often true; yet, I believe that it is literally and absolutely true in regard to the passing away of Maulana Azad. I do not mean to say that no great men will be born in India in future. We have had great men and we shall have great men; but, I do submit that the peculiar and special type of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else.

"We mourn today the passing of a great man, a man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through any problem to its core. I used the word 'luminous'. I think perhaps that is the best word I can use about his mind—a luminous mind. When we miss and when we part with such a companion, friend, colleague, comrade, leader, teacher—call him what you will—there is inevitably a tremendous void created in our life and activities".

Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, paid a glowing

tribute to Azad. He said, "Within this short period of great national awakening and excitement he had deeply impressed his colleagues and co-workers not by his eloquence, but also by the keenness of his intellect, the soundness of his counsel and his capacity to reconcile conflicting viewpoints and bring about amity in the midst of diversity. His devotion to the country, preparedness for sacrifice and courage of conviction were demonstrated again and again during the long period of struggle, a great portion of which he, like many of his colleagues, spent in prison or detention camps. He held fast to Hindu-Muslim unity and never budged an inch, standing firmly by it like a rock in the midst of uncharitable criticism and worse from many of his own co-religionists. Naturally enough, all sections of the country came to love and respect him. His counsel was sought to resolve all complicated tangles and it was freely and frankly given without fear or favour. Equally naturally, this trust in his wisdom, integrity and patriotism was exhibited when he was again elected President of the Congress in 1940 at a time when the Hindu-Muslim controversy was reaching a breaking point and a demand for a separate independent State for Muslims was being formulated and expressed. He continued as President during the most momentous period of Indo-British relations when negotiations for transfer of power were carried on again and again between the Congress through its President, Maulana Azad, and the representatives of the British Government."

PART II

OTHER NOTABLE FIGURES

1 | Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan My Days With Him

MOHAMMAD YUNUS

It was my fortune to know Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as Badshah Khan or Frontier Gandhi. There is a wealth of images from his life that I associate with the times that I was with him. I received my political initiation from him and worked closely under his guidance for many years. The first occasion to reflect on my experiences was in the District Jail at Abbottabad, where I was serving imprisonment with him during the 'Quit India' movement. He was not keeping well and doctors felt that a change may do him good. So he was transferred to Haripur Central Jail. Thus left alone in the solitary glory of captivity, I began to see the old in new colours. The past as well as reality became doubly real. In the midst of hectic pre-occupations that were dictated by moments of time speeding one into the other, where was the occasion earlier to find out how much he had had to suffer, how he created a powerful mass movement, what were his habits, his weaknesses or his strong points. We had been totally under the spell of his wondrous courage and humanity. It had overpowered us to an extent that we were willing to undergo any sacrifice at his behest. It was different in jail. We were cut off from the problems facing the country and immune from the sights and sounds of the world. Only a few of us were there and he was among us like an open book.

I tried to analyse the phenomenon of this great personality and sought an answer to the question : who and what is Badshah Khan ? As a boy he had been simple and

quiet and later wanted to join the army. But it was the arrogant behaviour of an English officer towards an Indian subordinate that changed his preference for a military career. Afterwards he did not go to England because his mother could not bear the thought of losing him like her elder son, Dr. Khan Saheb, who was in England for many years. These two setbacks made him forsake all the possible fulfilments that go with youth and its ardours. He finally decided to give up his own ambition and brave the various odds of life in order to serve his people. This was nearly 70 years ago when the imperial British rule did not hesitate to impose its authority in any manner. A senior British officer once asked him that he was going round opening schools in the Frontier and making people literate. "What is the guarantee that they will not rebel against us once they are educated". Such was the alien mentality even about an elementary obligation to spread knowledge.

Badshah Khan came under the influence of Haji Abdul Wahid of Turangzai, who was a divine-cum-educationist turned revolutionary and who preferred to operate from the tribal areas and wielded great influence over the Mohmans and the Afridis. Badshah Khan took charge of his educational centre in Mardan district and devoted his energies to the spread of primary education among the Pathans. He found a band of devoted and selfless workers, who succeeded in opening a network of Azad Schools in various parts of the Frontier. This association enabled him to meet the common man, whose lot compelled him to identify himself more with the body politic of the area, resolve their internecine battles and carve a niche for himself in their hearts.

The Pathans were impressed by his God-given gifts of character and they responded overwhelmingly to his call. He too enlarged the scope of his work and kept increasing his popular involvement. More and more people fell under his spell and decided to tread the thorny path to India's freedom. The perils of prison life were courageously accepted as even the rigours of economic and physical tortures. The alien authority could not tolerate that defiance of their authority and took to severer measures. The verocity of these was highlighted during 1931-32 when large number of people

were killed, many more imprisoned, while others forced to watch their houses burnt or other crops destroyed.

He had been warned by the British to lay his hand off the people or face its dire consequences. This they did and even his 95-year-old father was not spared. He was clamped into jail for the 'sinful activities' of his son on the Frontier, forgetting that his elder son was at that very time fighting their battles in France. Dr. Khan Saheb had joined the army and was serving as a doctor in the army during the First World War. However, the outcome of foreign tyranny had the opposite effect as it drove him to more active politics. Gandhiji had appeared on the scene and the country began to wear a new look. Thinking itself took a new direction and Gandhian waves reached the boundaries of the Frontier and swept its people into the mainstream of freedom struggle. Badshah Khan was in the forefront of the Hajrat and Khilafat Movements and was in touch with the Muslim divines, preaching 'Jehad' against the foreign ruler. Those experiences later led him to lay the foundations of a new party and thereby savour the dubious pleasure of His Majesty's prisons time and again. Nothing could deter him from his path and he kept moving towards his goal more enthusiastically. In 1926, he toured some of the Muslim countries in West Asia and returned with the conviction that imperialism could be fought only through Hindu-Muslim unity. His adherence to this concept has remained firm and final.

Non-violence

The Pathan masses quivered with excitement at his speeches and joined the movement in droves. He infected his trigger-happy followers with the principles of non-violence and told them. "So long you relied on weapons, but without success. Why not place your trust in God and face the enemy with courage and confidence." They accepted his advice with impunity and started the world. Though a simple person, his approach to national issues was most rational. He travelled throughout the Province and told the masses, who were victims of superstition and believed in predestined fate that their misery was not due to any divine misfortune,

but the change would come only through hard work as God helps those who help themselves. His charismatic personality made the whole world look at him with awe. The people of India were particularly impressed and the Congress offered to make him its President. But this man of God preferred to keep working among the masses without that distinction bestowed on him. He is thus the only person to have declined that great honour.

A man of action, he preached only what could be easily implemented. He gave the message of non-violence to the Pathans and in order to explain it, he had one-act plays presented which showed how force could be faced calmly and bravely. He wanted unity and resolved not to compromise with anything to the contrary. He thus established his own integrity and credibility. He believed in discipline and to enforce it, he formed the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. He wanted his followers to lead a simple life and no one could be a better example of this than he himself. To his many disciples, he was an embodiment of truth and courage and an unfaltering visionary who could survive any hardship or difficulty.

Negotiations were going on during the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the British Government was reluctant to release Badshah Khan. The Viceroy told Gandhiji that he was "a wild fanatic, who could not be regarded as a non-violent resister". Gandhiji contested that wild accusation and made Badshah Khan's release a condition to suspend the Satyagrah movement. He asked the Viceroy and the Home Member, Sir Herbert William Emerson, to meet Badshah Khan and judge for himself what type of a man he was. On his release, Gandhiji suggested to Badshah Khan to meet Mr. Emerson. He had always shirked such meetings and pleaded "Don't ask me to walk on a slippery path. I might slip." Gandhiji's ways were different and he succeeded in persuading his Pathan comrade to follow suit. He went to see the Home Member, whose opening remark was "What is common between you and the Hindus? Leave them alone and we will give you anything you want". That meeting ended abruptly and Badshah Khan went straight to Gandhiji and told him. "Didn't I tell you that these Britishers only make

mischiefs. They are not only dividing the communities, but want a rift between you and me also." This upset Gandhiji a great deal and he spoke to the Viceroy and pointed out that Badshah Khan was a straight-forward worker and could not apprehend such foul play. This episode led to the establishment of a lasting friendship between the two great men, who grew more and more attached to each other. We are all aware of Gandhiji's affection for Badshah Khan and I hope there is no need to point out the latter's adherence to those lofty principles even today. He has indeed paid the price for it.

These were some of the thoughts that came to me in the Abbottabad jail in 1943. I could also write of his life inside the prison, which was a shining example of restraint and forbearance. His austerity and detachment made him shun dependence on ordinary needs, as he was content to live on the jail diet. He washed his own clothes and took care of his other necessities. He had taught himself the supreme lesson of coping with difficult tasks with patience and determination. While he was writing his autobiography, we got the opportunity to know what he had gone through, understand the various personalities and events of the by-gone days and get familiar with his critical assessment of past happenings. Apart from that writing, he was fond of reading as well. He treated the jail authorities with discretion and kept them at a distant cordiality. He used to tell us that too much familiarity with them has its own hazards, as intimacy with them results in creating disunity among the political prisoners.

I got another occasion to reflect on Badshah Khan during his visit to India in 1968-69. I was at that time serving as Ambassador in Algeria and was called to take care of his extensive tour programme. He came here for the first time after a lapse of 22 years and got tremendous ovations wherever he went. The old Gandhites clustered around him to begin with, but found his utterances most discomfiting. He too saw them function in a totally un-Gandhian manner and had no hesitation to point it out frankly and fearlessly. He spent five months touring the different States and spoke of a new concept of politics. The impact of his speeches was two-

fold. The masses thought he was telling the truth, but the 'old guard of the Congress' felt that he was opening a Pandora's box. The so-called Gandhites were unable to face the truth and simply slunk away. Not one of them was there to see him off when he finally took off for Kabul in February '69. This naturally hurt the old man. To the people at large his presence acted like a tonic. He reminded them of Gandhi's message of truth, love and non-violence and stood before them as an embodiment of those ideals. They saw in him a true representative of an era that had almost vanished. His stand definitely helped those who were trying to recapture some of the old glamour and grandeur. His observations had great relevance to the eventual split in the Congress and in the line up of the forces in the country. In this context I am reminded of what an important opposition leader told Badshah Khan at that time. He came to complain that his speeches were helping Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to which Badshah Khan replied that he had never said a word in her favour. But when pressed about his helpful stand again and again, he said 'probably people think that she is following in Gandhiji's footsteps. How can I change their views?'

'Since he has left no private papers and diaries, it is difficult to write on Rafi Ahmad Kidwai or about his political performances, role, achievements and political contributions. It is really tragic that tributes paid to him usually centre round only his successful tackling of the food problem, his administrative feats, the Night Air Mail Service, the Sunday holiday for postmen and the innumerable stories related by persons who had experienced his vast and stealthy generosity but no tributes are paid to his political contributions.'

Padmaja Naidu had rightly remarked that "Rafi Ahmad Kidwai does not lend himself to a definite political biography". "Fate never gave him the chance to put both his hands on the steering wheel but only the tantalizing chances of a seat next to the driver or a back seat from which he tried to steer the car very often to the great exasperation of the driver—whether it was Jawaharlal Nehru or Govind Ballabh Pant."

During the 34 years of his public life his political contribution and performances had been substantial.

Early influences

He was greatly influenced by his illustrious uncle—Vilayat Ali Bamboog, who was a distinguished product of M.A.O. College, and had in turn been influenced by Maulana Muhammad Ali and among his close friends were such distinguished personalities like Shoaib Quraishi, Chaudhri Khaliquz Zaman, Raja Ghulam Husain, Dr. Nazir Uddin Hasan—all products of M.A.O. College. His interest in politics never abated and his

house in Bara Banki became a rendezvous for all politically conscious persons to discuss current political problems and secret meetings were often held there. He was a leading member of the Congress and the Muslim League. There was hardly any political or national movement of importance in which he had not taken part. He was also in touch with revolutionaries. Because of his anti-British and nationalist activities, he was constantly being shadowed by the CID specially after his meeting with Maulana Muhammad Ali at Chindwara where he had been interned. He was a regular contributor to the *Comrade* of Mohd. Ali in which he wrote under the pen name of Bombooq in his inimitable satirical style and also to Raja Ghulam Hussain's *New Era*. Rafi imbibed love of his country and keen interest in politics from his uncle.

After passing matriculation examination, Rafi joined the MAO College. Soon he made himself popular by greatly improving the quality of the food of the dining hall as the food monitor to the admiration of all. He readily interested himself in all the patriotic moves which were anti-British. He took a keen interest in the activities of the college union and because of the nationalistic views, his name appeared prominently in the black list of 'rebel' students prepared by Dr. Ziauddin—the arch loyalist principal. He was looked upon as a dangerous revolutionary whose presence in the college was considered to be detrimental to the interest of the Government. He might have been rusticated from the college had he not left it in 1920. During his stay at college he had shown his marvellous organizing skill by conducting successfully the election campaign of the college union. Often he put up candidates who were persona non-grata with the college authorities. During his college days, he was generous to a fault as he always helped his needy friends with the money he received from his uncle and was always short of money on this account.

He kept himself fully abreast of political happenings in the country. Tilak and Annie Besant had a special appeal for him.

A protest meeting against Mrs. Besant's internment in June 1917 had been organized by Rafi's uncle when the district magistrate refused the permission to hold the meeting at the

Town Hall; he arranged it at his house and Rafi helped his uncle in successfully holding this meeting.

First contact with Congress

Rafi's first contact with the Congress took place in December 1916 when he attended the 31st session of the Congress which was held in Lucknow through the intercession of his uncle as his father being a Government servant was reluctant to give the permission.

His uncle's death at the early age of 33 in 1918 was a calamity particularly for him. He had received his first lesson of politics from him and was very much devoted to him. He continued to enjoy the patronage of the Ali brothers, Raja Ghulam Hussain and other friends of his uncle. He graduated from MAO College and joined LLB.

He became the regular member of the Congress in 1920 and left his studies in 1921 to join the great Khilafat non-cooperation movement. Jawaharlal Nehru's whirlwind tours of U.P. went a long way to give impetus to the movement among students and he made a deep impression on Rafi. He developed a love for him, which was to develop into life long comradeship.

The non-co-operation movement had been quite a success in Bara Banki district under the leadership of Rafi. He along with his brother Shafi, who had resigned his post of assistant registrar of co-operative societies and had joined the non-cooperation movement, had been sentenced to one year and to ten months respectively.

Motilal Nehru's private secretary

He was released in 1922 and was picked up by Motilal Nehru as his private secretary. From that day began his very close association with the Nehru family and his loyalty to this family was never shaken and his love for Jawaharlal was only next to his love for his country. This also helped him to come into close contact with very leading personalities of the country.

After the collapse of the non-cooperation movement, he

continued to take part in all the activities of the Congress. He regularly attended all its annual sessions not only as a delegate but as a member of the All India Congress Committee. He was one of the secretaries of the reception committee of the 40th session of the Congress, which was held in December 1925 in Kanpur.

His politics in those days was in conformity with his leader Motilal Nehru's who along with C.R. Das and others was in favour of carrying on the national struggle inside the legislature and wrecking the government from within.

Rafi worked hard during all those years which preceded and followed the formation of the Swaraj Party and undertook a tour of Upper India. He played with his leader a most notable role in achieving marvellous results with his great organizing skill. It was at this time that he learnt the art of dislodging and disarming his opponents. He played a more important role not only in the elections to the Central Assembly and U.P. Legislative Council but in the elections of local bodies in which the Swarajists were returned in a majority. His organizing skill made a deep impression on all those who came into contact with him. Soon after he had to shoulder greater responsibilities. With his leader, Motilal Nehru, he had to bear the major burden which increased manifold when dissensions among the Swarajists led to the secessions of the Maharashtra group who formed the responsivist Party. Mainly through the efforts of Motilal Nehru and Rafi, a national demand which represented the greatest common measure of agreement among non-official members of the Central Assembly on the immediate grant of Dominion status was put forward.

As chief whip

In the elections of 1926, Rafi was elected to the Central Assembly from Oudh Muslim Constituency. He soon made his deep mark in the assembly as the chief whip of the 'Swarajist's or the opposition party. He put questions and elicited information on various matters of public information and on matters connected with the welfare of the man in the street.

It is a tribute to his tact that on numerous occasions he was able to manoeuvre a majority of votes to get adjournments

of the Assembly in spite of the stiff opposition of the Government.

Rafi's capacity for manipulation and man-management played a great part. He did these manipulations from his house in Daryaganj, which Dr. Ansari had named as the Serai (Inn) where he boarded with several Swarajist Muslims and also Abdul Mateen Chaudhri, one of Mr. Jinnah's principal lieutenants through whom he manipulated the uncertain Muslim votes in the Assembly. His greatest hour as a whip came in 1928, when he succeeded in getting the majority of votes to reject the raising of the Salt Duty in the Finance bill. Even the nominated members followed his advice so much that the Home Member and Finance Member felt very much perturbed.

Sir Basil Blackete complained to Motilal that Rafi misled the members by giving them incorrect information. Rafi retorted by collecting the data and proved that the statistics of the Finance Member were quite wrong. His most important function in those days was to keep his leader Motilal Nehru fully posted with the machinations of some Swarajist leaders who were intensely jealous of Motilal and also about those members of the party who despite their brilliance as witty debators and very able parliamentarians were vulnerable to temptation and on which account Rafi mistrusted them. Among them were Shan-Mukham Chetty, C. S. Ranga Iyer and his intuitive judgements of these star stage performers of the Congress party in the Central Assembly proved right when they did not join the freedom struggle in 1930 and one of these leading renegades was Chetty, who had been knighted by the British Government, and who had been brought as the first Finance Minister of free India in 1947 by Sardar Patel and who had been exposed as the Trojan horse of the Big Business by Rafi and finally thrown out.

A missed chance

One little known instance of Rafi's back room operation was that in March 1927 he had nearly pulled off a Hindu-Muslim settlement on the basis of joint electorate. At his Daryaganj house the Muslim leaders of all shades of opinion including the Ali Brothers met for a dinner and arrived at the basis of a

Hindu-Muslim settlement in the future constitution. It gave the Muslims a fair share in the governance of a future India by providing for their statutory majority in the Punjab and Bengal Legislative councils, the separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency and the elevation of N. W. F. and Baluchistan as the two other Muslim majority provinces. In return for these concessions, the Muslims were to give up separate electorate in favour of joint electorate. Weightage was to be granted in both the Hindu and Muslim majority provinces in the legislatures in equal proportions. But unfortunately the Delhi entente was sabotaged by Jai Ram Das Daulatram, Chorthram Gidwani and other Sindh Congress leaders, the communalist Sikh leaders and over and above all these by Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya who wriggled out of the settlement which had been accepted by all the Hindu and Sikh leaders at the All-Parties' Conference held in Delhi in February 1928. Thus a great opportunity had been lost by the Congress leaders. Had they not shown their weakness the history of the country would have been quite different.

By the end of 1928, Rafi emerged in public view as the secretary of All-Parties' National Convention held in Calcutta in December 1928 to adopt the Nehru Report. Unfortunately this convention broke up among communal bickerings as those who swallowed the camel of Pakistan later strained at the gnat of Jinnah's amendment, demanding safeguards for the Muslim minority and drove him in the arms of Muslim communalists. Maulana Muhammad Ali was hooted down when he moved his amendment demanding complete independence instead of Dominion status. This shabby treatment meted out to him led to his parting of company with the Congress, along with his brother and along with a large number of other Muslims. Thus the Congress lost the legendary Ali Brothers who were still the most influential Muslim leaders.

In 1929 Rafi galvanised into activity the rump of nationalist Muslims which had survived the large scale exodus of Muslims from the Congress fold after the national convention. In fighting for the Nehru Report he was acting with deep conviction. He strongly believed that joint electorate was essential for the survival of Muslims in India and mixed electorate alone could keep in check Hindu communalism, the necessity for Hindu

politicians to seek Muslim votes would thwart the rise of fire-eating rank Hindu communalists. He used to say that with joint electorates the better qualities of the Muslim character—their physical courage, their human warmth and hospitality, their comparative indifference to money and material anxieties for tomorrow would give them a honourable place in India.

But the tide of Muslim opinion ran strongly against the Nehru Report. The narrow-mindedness shown at the national convention was responsible for this reaction and the British Government faced with the threat of Congress Civil Disobedience Movement intensified their old game of divide and rule with all the patronage and power of corruption at their command and they began to patronize Muslim communalists.

No rent campaign

On the eve of the Civil Disobedience movement, Rafi issued a public statement in which he expressed himself in favour of a combination of constitutional obstruction in the legislature and the mass direct action for the legislature could be a tremendous vehicle of anti-British propaganda with the immunities they provided to the militants. The significance of this statement was personal. It showed his characteristic courage to declare his dissent from the most powerful leaders of the Congress. This remained an abiding quality in him.

When the Civil Disobedience movement started in April 1930, Rafi instead of performing the ritualistic Salt Satyagraha took Motilal Nehru's permission to organise the 'no-rent' campaign among the peasants of Rae Bareilly as he thought that the ritualism of the Salt Satyagraha could not be enough of nuisance for the British.

In organizing this 'no-rent' campaign, his obscurity proved to be an asset. 'He had studiously avoided the camera and the police authorities, therefore, took some time to connect his name with his face which gave him the necessary respite to organize the peasant campaign. He adopted queer ways. He lived for one whole month in the waiting room of Rae Bareilly railway station buying and returning tickets as though he were a transient passenger to catch the next train. The campaign was

a great success. It spread as a wild fire in the whole district and was stilled only after many arrests and lathi charges. It was the precursor of a much bigger agrarian movement in U.P. in 1931-32 which put U.P. in the vanguard of the national movement.

After his release he rushed to the bedside of the dying Motilal Nehru in Lucknow and on his death he swore silently a life-long fidelity and friendship to Jawaharlal Nehru—the son of the departed leader and remained faithful to this vow to the last days of his life.

Fighting communalism

During the period between Gandhi-Irwin pact and the commencement of the second Civil Disobedience movement he mobilised nationalist Muslim opinion to fight Muslim communalism when the British Government used to oppose the national demand for dominion status at the Round Table Conference. An All-India Nationalist Muslim Conference was held in Lucknow to support the Congress and its object. Rafi had been elected as one of the secretaries of this organisation. Unfortunately this organisation soon became defunct.

During the first ten years of his political career, he had been functioning at the Centre under the guidance of Motilal Nehru. Jawaharlal was bent on working up the peasant movement in U.P. and inducted him into the leadership of U.P. Congress. He had been appointed as one of the secretaries of the U.P. Congress and the main organiser of the agrarian movement. But he was somewhat reluctant to get involved in U.P. Congress affairs as he had deep reservation against some of the frontranking leaders of the U.P. Congress like P.D. Tandon and the Benaras group whom he suspected to be Hindu revivalists cum communalists and he feared that he would not get on with them but he had to accept the secretaryship on Jawaharlal Nehru's insistence.

While Gandhiji was away at the Round Table Conference in London in 1931, the U.P. Congress under Nehru's leadership and Rafi's organisational drive had hotted up a peasants' agitation in U.P. By the time Gandhi landed back the second civil disobedience movement was resumed. After his arrest Nehru

sent this brief message to Rafi, which Kamla Nehru had delivered to Rafi's brother Shafi: "Tell Rafi to be in no hurry to go to prison, there is a lot to do".

No account, but memory

Being an unphotographed little-noticed Congress leader Rafi escaped the first sweep of arrests and therefore, he was able for several months to move throughout the province organising the movement. He had to solve the most important and the most difficult problem of collecting money to feed and sustain the indigent Congress volunteers. Pandit Malaviya with his money connection among rich Hindus helped him out of his financial troubles. He had a bitter experience of Dr. K.N. Katju who despite his roaring practice did not come out with any substantial help. He raised small sums of money from here and there to run the movement. The more interesting part of the story is that he did not keep any accounts but had a fantastic memory for the figures.

During the days of the Civil Disobedience Movement he used clandestine methods. Letters to the Congress workers in the different parts of the provinces would either be carried by secret messengers or be sent to false pre-arranged addresses by post. It was through these methods of Rafi that Congress in U.P. survived and continued the struggle during those days of great oppression. He was responsible for sending as many as 900 delegates to attend the outlawed sessions of the Congress held in Calcutta. This was one of his great achievements.

Despite the fact that by early 1933 the Civil Disobedience movement had practically died he was dead opposed to surrender. So in 1933, Rafi made a violent onslaught on the Congress leadership which was thinking in terms of withdrawing the Movement. When Gandhiji started his country-wide campaign for Harijan uplift, Rafi stoutly prevented the diversion of the fighting cadres of U.P. Congress to the anti-untouchability campaign and on this account the militant U.P. Congress remained aloof from it and Nehru also took up the same stand.

Study of Marx

During the early 30's, Rafi had studied Marx and the

western socialist literature and had been deeply influenced by socialism. A Congress Socialist Party had been formed before his release and almost half of the U.P. Congress organisation and some spectacular leaders like Narendar Dev, Sri Prakash, Sampurnanand had all joined it. Rafi was ideologically closer to the Congress Socialists than the constitutionalists like G.B. Pant but paradoxically his personal attachment to Pant was only next to Jawaharlal and towards all other U.P. Congress Socialists, he was cool excepting to Sri Prakash". After his release in August 1934, he launched a wild onslaught on the Congress leadership. In an article published in the *Pioneer*, he accused the Congress Working Committee of having betrayed and let down the national movement and indicted several leaders for their personal betrayals. He denounced the newly appointed Parliamentary Board as an undemocratic body and threatened Congress that he would make the U.P. Congress to boycott the forthcoming elections to the Central Assembly if the Congress creed of complete independence was not reiterated.

Although because of Jawaharlal's letter he could not be expelled from the Congress, Sardar Patel and other members of the Congress High Command did not forgive him for his onslaught. And therefore for the next twelve years Rafi was not given a place on the Congress Working Committee, although he was the toughest, staunchest and organizationally the most deeply rooted Muslim in the Congress ranks.

He was summoned at Wardha for discussions and he won both his points. The Congress goal of complete independence was reiterated by the Congress Working Committee and it was also decided to have a new parliamentary board elected by the A.I.C.C. after the Central Assembly elections.

Rafi was bitterly opposed to the changes proposed by Gandhiji in the Congress constitution at the forthcoming Bombay Congress session which could have made the Congress cent per cent Gandhian with a smaller selective membership for which the qualifications were handspinning or some other form of socially ameliorative work in villages. He considered it to be a plot by the Congress rightists to reduce Jawaharlal's importance in the Congress. He criticized Gandhiji for trying to convert the Congress into an All India Spinners Association type of organization. To him the large body of pure militants

in the Congress—the Four Annā membership was a guarantee for Congress militancy as a franchise like it made the influx of the peasants and workers easy. A franchise of hand spinning for Congress membership would have converted the Congress organization into Patelite power machine. He was fully aware of Nehru's weak position in the Congress and the extreme hostility of the Patelite group to Nehru including that of Gandhi's personal entourage that is of Mahadev Desai and Jamnalal Bajaj. He was afraid that the proposed changes by Gandhiji would reform the Congress into the image of All India Spinners Association and would cut the roots of Nehru in the Congress. Therefore at the Bombay session of the Congress he mustered forces with the Congress Socialists to bring about substantial changes in the Gandhian amendments which prevented the transformation of the Congress into an All-India Spinners Association type of organization.

His dominating passion was to wreck the 1935 act but he did not rule out the other options, that is, should the Congress decide to accept office under the act of 1935. He, therefore, thought of being in a position to control the ministry. But the U.P. Congress at the time was in the hands of Congress Socialists who had strong ties with P.D. Tandon and anti-socialists like Acharya Kripalani. Congress men who did not belong to the group in power were squeezed out of key places.

He concluded that excepting Acharya Narendra Deva, the U.P. Congress Socialists were no Socialists. Among them were included Hindu revivalists with strong anti-Muslim streak in their ideologies and they were closer to the Hindu chauvinism of P.D. Tandon than to Marx. When the Congress Socialists put up P.D. Tandon as a candidate for the Chairmanship of the reception committee of the forthcoming Lucknow Congress session against Mohanlal Saxena he decided to oppose the Congress Socialist caucus. Since he suspected in Tandon a secret jealousy of Jawaharlal Nehru, he disliked him. Moreover he was looking beyond the factional fight to the next phase in the U.P. when provincial autonomy would be ushered. And he was firmly of the view that for a composite Hindu-Muslim province like U.P. the choice by the Congress of a premier like Tandon would be fatal to its national image.

The overwhelming majority of district Congress committees

voted for him as the next President of U.P. Congress. In 1935, he had staged a successful coup against the ruling Congress Socialist caucus.

As the president of U.P. Congress Parliamentary Board the whole burden of fighting elections in U.P. under the act of 1935 fell on him. He proved more than a match for the arduous task. He was in possession of detailed information about the position and prospects of each of the candidates. He had at his finger's tips the number of actual voters in each locality and the number expected to vote for the Congress. He remembered the names and number of workers allotted to each constituency and knew how many of them could be relied upon. The Congress message was carried to every village. Rafi toured the whole of U.P. using every conceivable means of transport. The Congress in U.P. had obtained a glorious victory by winning 134 seats out of 228 of U.P. assembly. This was the most remarkable and glorious achievement of Rafi. The National Agriculturalist Party, that is the party of zamindars, had been routed in general constituencies despite the official patronage and favours.

Before the elections, Rafi had entered into a pact with Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya who had formed a Congress Nationalist Party earlier and had opposed the Congress in the Central Assembly election over the ambivalent policy of the Congress over the communal award. It was a pact made unilaterally by Rafi. The Congress Nationalists were to fight elections as Congress men and if any question regarding communal award came up before the U.P. Assembly, they would have the freedom to vote according to their conscience. This formula had been proposed by Rafi knowing fully that no question concerning the communal award would really come before the U.P. assembly and that the Pandit was interested only in fielding a few candidates. Another advantage was that Malaviya could provide funds because of his extraordinary influence with the capitalists and Maharajas.

He had a similar pact or under-cover liaison with Ch. Khaliqzaman—the leader of Muslim League. Both the Congress and Muslim League had joined hands to give a tough fight to the NAP that is the Zamindar Party but he did not pay any attention to his own constituency—Gonda District—and con-

sequently he lost'. During the election campaign acute shortage was of money. Since U.P. was Jawaharlal's province, it was no favourite of Patel—the controller of the Congress purse and chairman of the Congress Central Parliamentary Board and, therefore, it received only a meagre amount from him. Rafi raised money by somewhat devious means. He raised money from landlord members of N.A.P., who were anxious to see the landlord rival defeated by the Congress candidate. He contacted bank managers and got money on personal pronotes. He even got one of his friends—a Government servant—to loan him money borrowed from his provident fund. Congressmen fighting the wealthy landlords in the rural areas appealed to him for money and " marvelled at seemingly magical powers of producing money from somewhere." During these months of great anxiety and tension, he had recurring heart attacks but he carried his work with enormous will. Nehru paid a warm tribute to him publicly for his masterly feat of organizing election of U.P.

The first task of the Congress Party in U.P. Assembly was to elect its leader. By standing and influence in U.P. Congress, Tandon ranked next to Nehru but since the Congress Party had a majority of Rafi's men and since Jawaharlal also disliked Tandon for his Hindu revivalism, it was easy for Rafi to get him knocked down. His choice fell on Pant but Jawaharlal was somewhat cool towards him as he considered Pant no better and a moderate constitutionalist like Kunzru. So Rafi in the task of electing Pant as the leader of U.P. Congress Assembly party secured the support of Narendra Deva who together with him succeeded in getting the approval of Nehru to the election of Pant.

Revenue Minister

He was vehemently opposed to office acceptance but when the Congress decided to form a ministry in July 1937, he was appointed as the Revenue Minister and before that he had been returned unopposed to the U.P. Assembly from Bahraich in a bye election. This was due to Congress-League cordiality. Both Congress and League had fought the N.A.P. and close understanding not in the form of any formal or express pact between

the two. Quite a good number of Muslim M.L.A's happened to be former Congressmen and Khilafatists. The leader of the U.P. Muslim League Assembly Party Ch. Khaliquzzaman had been a prominent Congress leader. So it was expected that in U.P. there would be a coalition ministry of the Congress and the Muslim League. Moreover, the League election manifesto was to a considerable extent similar to that of the Congress manifesto.

After the election according to Rafian', "Rafi now put through a manoeuvre which if it had succeeded would have finished the Muslim League in U.P. just as he had finished Malaviya's Congress Nationalist Party. He got Ch. Khaliquzzaman to agree to a formula by which the Muslim League was to join the Congress Party in U.P. Assembly but, like the Malaviyite Congress nationalists would retain freedom to vote independently on any issue affecting the interests of the Muslim community. Here again as in the case of the Malaviyite Congress nationalists he had agreed to the special indulgence for the Muslim League merger with the Congress Party because he could hardly imagine any communal issue to be coming up before the U P. Assembly under provincial autonomy.

A manoeuvre

The Muslim share in the service had already been fixed. Urdu, their mother tongue, was safeguarded; the Congress had no intention of interfering with the Muslim Personal Law and endowments. Where was there any fundamental difference between the Congress and Muslim League on any Hindu-Muslim issue and where would be the occasion for Muslim Leaguers in the Congress Party to exercise their conceded right of dissent from the party on an issue affecting the Muslims? The only issue which would come up before the assembly would be the question of political and civil liberties, of reduction in rent and the protection of U.P. oppressed tenantry from the landlord.

The question which the U.P. legislature was to debate would be only economic and social and unless there was a communal opposition dead set on raising communal controversy in the Assembly such Hindu-Muslim contentions were not likely to

arise from the inherent nature of the U.P. Assembly legislative business. Rafi had by a shrewd political stroke eliminated the possibility of a Hindu communal opposition in the shape of Malaviyite nationalists. By a similar stroke, he wanted to eliminate Muslim communal opposition. Pant approved of it. The majority of the Muslim League party led by Khaliquzzaman were also agreeable. But unfortunately, Rafi this time failed in his manoeuvre.

In the first place, Jinnah was opposed to this as this agreement went against his political ambition. He had revived the Muslim League on the philosophy of equal distance both from the Congress and the British Government and he aimed at organizing the Muslims as a separate force with which the Congress would have to settle for the governance of the country. Since the Muslim League had fared badly in the Muslim majority provinces excepting in Bengal where it came next to Fazlul Haque's Praja Krishak Party, Jinnah's hope now rested only in U.P., Bombay, Madras and C.P. where the League had won substantial number of Muslim seats of the provincial assemblies.

Secondly, Jawaharlal was also vehemently opposed to this agreement as he had concluded from the sweeping victories of the Congress in U.P., Bihar, Madras, which he himself had helped to bring about, that this victory had eliminated all other forces and the Congress was the sole representative body of all the Indians. He firmly believed that if Congress wooed the Muslim masses with its social and economic programme they could be won for it. To him religious and cultural barriers between the Hindus and Muslims were raised by propertied classes for their vested interest and that social, and economic issues alone appealed to the masses whether Hindu or Muslim. The U.P. Congress Socialists reinforced him in this conviction while his personal entourage of Muslim communists in the A.I.C.C. office, namely Dr. K. M. Ashraf, Dr. Z. A. Ahmad and Mahmooduzzafar, constantly dinned this theory into his ears. The Muslim mass contact programme had already been launched by him and Dr. Ashraf had been put in charge. If Khaliquzzaman were to get two seats in the U.P. Cabinet he could have brought the Muslim League into the Congress. He wanted the second ministry for Nawab Ismail Khan, the

President of U.P. Muslim League but the Congress offered only one seat to him as it stuck to the cabinet of the six for U.P. and the second Muslim minister was to be Rafi himself. As Khaliquzzaman could not carry the Muslim League with one seat, that is without Ismail Khan, the negotiations which were being carried on by Maulana Azad fell through because of Jawaharlal's refusal to accept Khaliquzzaman's demand for two seats in the U.P. cabinet. This was largely on account of the influence of Dr. Ashraf and other Muslim communists who pressed for the inclusion of Dr. Hussain Zaheer, Sajjad Zaheer's brother who had been elected from the university constituency in the U.P. Cabinet to which neither Maulana Azad—the member incharge of U.P. affairs of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-committee—nor Pant and Rafi agreed and also on account of the stiff opposition of Tandon and Congress Socialist, led by Narendra Dev.

After the break-down of Congress-League negotiations several Muslim League M.L.A.'s defected to the Congress, including Hafiz Ibrahim, Sulaiman Ansari, Saeeduddin Khan and in this Rafi had a hand.

As a Revenue Minister Rafi lost no time in tackling the land act which was passed by the U.P. legislature despite the obstruction by landlords and Muslim League. This legislation made ejectment illegal and brought a great relief to U.P. tenancy. This was one of Rafi's greatest achievements.

The question of the release of political prisoners was pressing one on assumption of office. Rafi took up this question in right earnest. The Governor and the I.C.S. officers were deady opposed to this. Rafi took a strong line. This led to a ministerial crisis and the Congress ministries of U.P. and Bihar resigned over this issue but this crisis was resolved soon and the prisoners were released. This was Rafi's great victory.

During the brief spell of his ministership, that is of about 27 months, as a Minister for Jails, he carried out a number of far-reaching reforms and the whole system was overhauled and brought in line with the system obtaining in progressive countries. It would be no exaggeration to say that when Rafi laid down the reins of office in response to the Congress call in 1939, U.P.'s jails stood out far in advance of those of any other province in India.

For Bose

Rafi openly canvassed support for Subhas Bose with whose political views and programme he fully agreed when the latter contested for the Congress Presidentship for the second term in January 1939 in opposition to the Congress Right Wing led by Sardar Patel. On account of Rafi's support Bose got a majority of votes from U.P. The Congress Socialists were also with Rafi.

The anti-war individual Satyagraha in U.P. was launched in the winter of 1940 under the direction of Rafi and he too courted arrest.

Much before the 'Quit India' movement began Rafi was busy in the remote villages of U.P. preparing people for the coming struggle. He was considered too dangerous and was arrested in May 1942 under the Defence of India Rules. He was in all probability the first Congress leader to be arrested. His extensive tours to the farthest corners of the province had greatly helped to organise and prepare the people for the great struggle so that when the call came province was found in the forefront of the battle. Over 16,000 persons according to the official figures were sent behind prison bars and the collective fine amounted to Rs 28,32,000, the bulk of which was promptly realized through ruthless measures. 104 railway stations were attacked and damaged. About 100 instances of sabotage to railway tracks had been reported while 425 cases of sabotage to telephones and telegraphs were recorded and 119 post offices were destroyed.

Even in jail, Rafi continued to receive information about all that happened during those momentous days of 'Quit India' Movement through a network of reporters.

Elections

He was released in July 1943 after more than three years with completely shattered health. With his arrival in Lucknow, the councillor's residence where he resided leaped into life and people from different parts of the province flocked to it in large numbers. He now started preparation for the elections to Central Assembly and U.P. Assembly for giving a tough fight to

the Muslim League which had taken full advantage of the Congress absence from the scene for the three long years and to whom bureaucracy had lent its full support. He made a thorough survey of the Congress position in U.P. and he knew that the Congress would have an easy walk-over in the general constituencies but he had grave apprehension about the Muslim seats as the League propaganda patronised by official machinery had done havoc during the long absence of Congressmen in jail. Nationalist Muslims found themselves greatly handicapped. Muslim peasants, artisans and workers had been excluded from voters list as they were to vote for the Congress. Rafi demanded thorough revision of electoral rolls which was only partially accepted. He mobilised all the nationalist Muslims and a representative Parliamentary Board consisting of the Jamait-ul-Ulema, Majlis-i-Ahrar, Momin Conference, Shia Political Conference and others was formed and Rafi extended every possible help to this board. He was the convener of the U.P. Congress Parliamentary Board and the entire burden of election had fallen on him. The Government were using every device to prevent the Congress from coming back to the power and interfering in the elections specially in the Muslim constituencies. Practically, all the Muslims and English officials were openly partial to the Muslim League but the Congress fought against all these heavy odds. The Councillors' Residence was always full of visitors who came from all parts of the provinces and presented the scene of a big mela. Rafi helped them all.

He undertook a whirlwind tour of the province usually in a car. Due to the high speed at which he drove he got injuries on not less than half a dozen times and met with a most serious accident in December 1945.

During those stormy days of 1945-46, when the League propaganda had assumed forms of hooliganism, rowdyism, fanaticism and gangsterism and when Muslims, specially young Muslims and students, were being led astray by the false propaganda of the Muslim League, the writer had founded the Nationalist Muslim Students Federation to fight the Muslim League on the students' front and Rafi helped him in every possible way.

Thanks to Rafi's organizational ability and tireless efforts, the Congress and nationalist Muslims polled 35% of vote and

won 12 seats in U.P. Assembly and thus this claim of the Muslim League could not be substantiated that it represented cent per cent Muslims. In general seats, the Congress had an easy walk over. This election was a triumph for Rafi's marvelous organizing ability, tact, resourcefulness and skill.

In April 1946, the Congress ministry was formed for the second time and this time Rafi was given the more important portfolio of Home.

The Zamindari abolition resolution moved by Rafi was passed by U.P. Assembly. This was an epoch-making event.

During 1946-47, the communal situation in U.P. had very much aggravated on account of the hatred propaganda of the Muslim League after the celebration of Direct action by it in August 1946.

Fierce riots took place in U.P. at a number of places. The worst was at Garhmukteshwar where hundreds had been butchered. Rafi took stern measures to control the situation. He imposed punitive tax on the community. Records of public life who owed allegiance to Rafi had been squeezed out of the U.P. Congress with the full approval of the Sardar and at the instance of Pant and no heed was paid by the Sardar to their genuine complaint about malpractices and corruption which was widely rampant both in the U.P. Congress and U.P. Ministry. The group led by Paliwal and Triloki Singh had formed into Jan Congress.

In 1951, the All-India Kissan Mazdoor Parja Party was formed by devoted congressmen drawn from the different parts of the country under the chairmanship of Acharya Kripalani.

Rafi resigned both from the Congress as well as from the Cabinet and felt that the Congress had been deviating from its right path and was becoming a centre of corruption and reaction. This led in turn to the resignation of Nehru from the C.W.C. and from the Central Parliamentary Board. This was a shock treatment to the Congress. Unfortunately Tandon had to resign and A.I.C.C. elected Nehru in his place as the Congress President. In this way, Rafi greatly strengthened the hands of Nehru and the principle was accepted by the Congress that the Prime Minister was more important and that persons who were opposed to his ideology could not be allowed to follow and oppose his

policy. In October 1951, Rafi came back to the fold of the Congress.

When the Congress candidates were being selected for state and central legislatures, for the first general election, Rafi tried his level best that tickets should not be given to such Congress leaders, bosses, ministers and legislators who had no clean record. A screening committee at the central level had been set up for this purpose. Unfortunately, on account of the manipulation of persons who had come closer to Nehru on account of their opportunism proved to be too strong to sabotage the efforts of both the committee and Rafi. Moreover, Nehru was too magnanimous towards his old and some life-long comrades, and the Congress could not be purged of such unclean persons and undesirable elements. This greatly disappointed Rafi and he considered it as one of Jawaharlal Nehru's greatest tactical blunders. This was responsible for his somewhat cooling of relationship towards Nehru whom he adored.

Till the first general election of 1952 the country was facing the worst food problems. There was acute shortage of food-grains. The Food Portfolio was the most difficult one and had proved to be the graveyard of reputation of many stalwarts in the past. Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas Daulat Ram and K.M. Munshi—all had miserably failed. Rafi was given this portfolio in May 1952 and he performed the miracle within a short time. Instead of shortage there was a plenty and abundance of food-grains, prices began to fall and control was withdrawn and the whole situation was miraculously changed. The solving of the food problem of the country was the greatest and permanent achievement of Rafi. Another notable achievement was that he greatly helped the Nepalese nationalists when they were fighting against the reactionary anarchy.

He could always walk at any time in the parlour of Nehru to discuss matters with him and freely and frankly criticized him, and his actions. Nehru valued his criticism though he did not always agree with all that criticism. Yet many of his predictions came cent per cent true.

Rafi was an odd kind of person one does not come across. "His perspicacity of intellect, his power of observation never missed anything worth observing".

For a grandson to write objectively about his grandfather, whose name he also bears, is a feat as difficult, if not impossible, to perform as the elusive Indian rope-trick. I have seen neither done and will make no pretence of accomplishing either here.

This article is being written on the occasion of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's death anniversary. It is meant, therefore, that some comparison or at least association between the ideals and ideas of Badr-ud-Din Tyabji and those of Maulana Azad should be made. Indeed, Maulana Azad evidently had a high regard for the former. I distinctly remember the first occasion on which I met the Maulana and of our talk then. My old Oxford friend, Humayun Kabir, serving at the time as the general political factotum of the Maulana, had at my request arranged the meeting. This was in 1946. The Maulana was then the President of the Congress engaged in negotiations with the British Cabinet Mission in Delhi on the shape and contents of Indian independence. The Maulana had received me almost as someone whom he had known and liked before. This had both delighted and surprised me. The explanation for his favourable attitude towards me however, soon became clear. The Maulana had been a student of my grandfather's public career and views. He had come to have a special feeling for Badr-ud-Din Tyabji; so much so that its warmth was immediately extended to some one connected with him.

Badr-ud-Din Tyabji (Tyab Ali) was born in Bombay in 1844 and died in London in 1906. His father, Tyabji (Tyab Ali) Bhai Mian, was a scion of an old Cambay emigrant Arab family.

Impoverished and reduced to hawking by the 1808 Bombay fire he, yet, soon became a merchant prince. Despite, or as he would have claimed, because of his attachment to Islamic principles, Tyabji was adventurous, intrepid, and selfreliant. Not only did he visit Europe himself but sent all his six sons for education abroad; and had his daughters taught the Quran, Hindustani, Persian, Gujarati, and domestic science. The *Times of India*, London overland Summary's obituary (12-12-1863) stated, "He has made a name for himself which will live".

Early years

Badr-ud-Din, his son, undoubtedly owed his eminence principally to his inherited gifts, but also to his brothers, especially Camruddin's support. Camruddin returned as the first Indian Solicitor (1858) from England after seven and a half years. His account of England and the Law Courts, fired Badr-ud-Din's—then fifteen—ambitions. Badr-ud-Din's own resounding triumphs there—award of a special Certificate of Honour for "perfect French (acquired in twelve months) and outstanding progress in classics and Mathematics"; and the first prize in a Latin, French, and English Dramatic elocution Competition—and the consideration he received, gave him great self-confidence, and a capacity rare then, for dealing with Englishmen without inhibitions.

After passing the London Matriculation, weakening eyesight compelled him to return home. Besides his curricular studies he had learnt French, Urdu (from a Lucknow tutor in London), Arabic, Persian, Gujarati, and Marhatti. What he learnt he never forgot. After a year in India, he returned to London, joined the Middle Temple, became a Barrister (April 1867)—the first Indian in Bombay—and rose rapidly. An anecdote illustrated his mettle.

Barristers then used to call on Judges, so he called on Parsons ICS, who, in typical Anglo-Indian style, enquired, "What can I do for you? I am busy". "So am I" said Badr-ud-Din walking out. Parsons, realising his mistake, followed, and tried to make amends by praising his carriage and pair, but without success.

At the bar

Within ten years Badr-ud-Din became one of the leading Barristers; but in 1895, his health faltered, and he accepted a judgeship. This, as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta stated, was as enthusiastically welcomed by Hindus and Parsis as by Muslims. He acted as Chief Justice in 1902, the first Indian in Bombay. He was known as a great Judge, and for his courage and impartiality, typically shown by granting bail to Tilak in a sensational case after its rejection thrice by others, and admonishing eminent British Counsels for denigrating the Indian National Congress and Indian character. He said "I have always regarded it (Congress Presidentship) as the highest honour than being on this Bench. . . let me tell Counsel that in my Court no contemptuous reference to that body will be permitted", and "There is great deal of false evidence in Court, but this country has no monopoly of it. Tichbourne and his hundreds of false witnesses were not Indians.....Indian witnesses tell lies less discriminatingly on facts which it is not necessary for them to deny; whereas European witnesses are more discreet, denying just what is necessary; and therefore it is more difficult to detect where they lie".

Public life

Badr-ud-Din entered public life after three years at the Bar. In July 1871, he was prominent in the agitation that obtained an elective Council for the Bombay Municipal Corporation; and topped the list of those subsequently elected. From then on Badr-ud-Din Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, and Kashinath Tei-lang were popularly known (in that order) as "The Triumvirate", "The Three Stars" etc. of Bombay's public life. In 1882 he became a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, but resigned in 1886 for reasons of health. In 1885, he helped to found the Bombay Presidency Association and virtually ran it. Soon afterwards, the Indian National Congress held its first session in Bombay under its auspices; and Badr-ud-Din and Camruddin were among its delegates. Urgent business in Bombay prevented their attendance, that its opponents exploited alleging that Muslims were boycotting the Congress. Badr-ud-

Din vigorously denied this, declaring that he had "ever denounced all Communal and Sectarian prejudices". He missed the second Session also due to ill health, but was unanimously elected President of its third session in Madras (1887).

He and his brother, Camruddin were principally responsible for establishing the *Anjuman-i-Islam* in Bombay (1876) "for the betterment and uplift of Mussalmans in every direction". "Its working principle" defined by Badr-ud-Din was, "not to take the initiative when the interests of Mussalmans were common with the rest of the people of India, but to consider it a duty to take the initiative, if the interests of Mussalmans alone were affected, or if they were affected more than those of others".

As a speaker

Badr-ud-Din's speeches such as on the Ilbert Bill, Lord Ripon's administration, at the third Congress Session, etc. are models of close reasoning, balanced judgement and lucid exposition. Mr. Justice Russel said of him, "He was one of the most cultivated and perfect speakers in the English language I have ever heard".

Badr-ud-Din's own education and background, a harmonious blend of East and West, made him acutely conscious of its lack, particularly among Muslims. Indian attention, he thought, was too exclusively focussed on politics, too little on education and social reform; and that an advanced type of representative Government was useless, if the majority was ignorant. Therefore, he campaigned against *Purdah* all his life, holding that it went far beyond Qu'ranic injunctions (His was the first Muslim family to discard it; his daughters the first to be sent abroad for education); espoused the Age of Consent Bill (1891), despite Hindu and Muslim opposition, advocated making donations and bequests for education rather than for feeding religious mendicants or scriptural readings, etc.)

He showed his characteristic sense of public responsibility during the 1878 famine; and in 1898 when plague depopulated Bombay, by staying on to give heart to the public.

Badr-ud-Din with his light complexion, intellectual forehead, acquiline features, curly hair and well proportioned limbs

was a strikingly handsome youth. He looked like an eagle. Later, his face broadened; and his beard, dignified and compelling ways, gave him a leonine look. On all formal occasions, even in Court or on the Bench (unlike most England returned Indians) he wore his traditional family costume (Arab-Indian); but for excursions and sports he wore European clothes. He lived like his father in grand patriarchal patrician style, entertaining magnificently at Somerset House (now, St. Sophia's College for women) with its spacious grounds.

Badr-ud-Din's impact on society and his times was all pervasive. His intellectual and personal distinction—unbiased appraisal of Western thought and ways allied with an equal appreciation of the inherited Eastern—helped to destroy the myth of European superiority. Equally it enabled him to exert considerable influence for worthwhile causes on the more enlightened Englishmen without loss of personal or national dignity; in fact, with an accretion to both. He was not only as Mahatma Gandhi wrote "... for years, a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress, (*Harijan* 18-11-39)" but one of its creators. It gained its national character by Muslim participation largely through his influence. In this the difference between his outlook and that of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the other outstanding Muslim leader of the time was striking. On Badr-ud-Din Tyabji fell the main burden of counteracting the Two-Nation theory. This he did without abating a lot of his zeal for the advancement of backward Muslims; and was most remarkable by obtaining widespread non-Muslim co-operation for it. His Nationalism, absolute freedom from communalism or selfish ambition won their confidence. Among Muslims, Badr-ud-Din was the first to create a secular political consciousness; and nationally, he was a pioneer in making it the Indian ideal.

Two pairs

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Badr-ud-Din Tyabji were undoubtedly the two outstanding Indian Muslim leaders of the latter part of the XIXth century, just as Mahomed Ali Jinnah and Abul Kalam Azad were of the first half of the XXth century. The parallels and the divergence between these two pairs of

great men are striking. Not only were their personalities arresting and contrasting, but their ideas seminal and conflicting. The Indian Muslim community, or rather the Muslim population of the Indian sub-continent has from generation to generation been stirred and riven by them. Truth to tell, no stable equilibrium has yet been established in their hearts, even if it has been in some of their minds, about the validity of their respective roles in Indian history, their achievements, and their failures, judged even from the long-term interests of the Muslim community itself, let alone the Indian nation.

Here obviously this cannot be dealt with. It requires a much larger canvas. I cannot however forbear from stressing the need for doing this. The lack of it distorts not only our estimation of these great figures, but of our own code of political and social life.

Anyway, for presenting even a journalistic sketch of Badr-ud-Din Tyabji, I shall in some measure have to draw on the parallels and divergence between him and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, his great contemporary.

Both Sir Syed and Badr-ud-Din Tyabji, for instance, founded educational institutions that did, and continues to do sterling service, not only to the Muslim community but to the cause of balanced Indian nation building. Sir Syed's name as the founder of what is now the Aligarh Muslim University is a household word in practically every Muslim home in the Indian sub-continent. Every Indian educationalist and politician worth the name knows it. The name of the founder of the *Anjuman-i-Islam*, Bombay, that in many ways equals Aligarh in importance in the educational field is much less known. There are no annual Badr-ud-Din Tyabji Days celebrated at the Anjuman like Sir Syed's Day at Aligarh. The Anjuman's complex of schools, technical and training institutions has not been metamorphosed into a university, as the comparatively modest Mohmmammedan Anglo-Oriental College elevated to the rank of a University through the efforts of his followers and the active support of the British Indian Government a quarter of a century after his death.

Nevertheless, it has ever since been linked with his name.

Again, though titles are nowadays assiduously debunked (at least in public), in the old days, they had almost a consecrating effect. Syed Ahmed Khan was knighted. Badr-ud-Din Tyabji was not; though their respective claims for receiving such an accolade at the time, judged by any standard whether of personal or academic qualifications, state or public service and esteem were, if anything, weighted more in favour of the latter than the former. I wonder if it would be wrong to say that the official bar against the latter was his having been the III President of the Congress and championing the cause of forging a common Hindu-Muslim political identity that the British regarded as subversive. In sharp contrast, Syed Ahmed Khan was taking the lead in exploiting to the full (what Peter Hardy in his most perceptive book, *The Muslims in British India* terms) the British readiness in the eighteen seventies and early eighties "to treat Muslims as a distinct political *interest* in India" (I underline the word 'interest'). Thus while in 1887 as President of the Congress Badr-ud-Din Tyabji was pleading from its platform that Muslims should join the Congress, Syed Ahmed Khan started the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental Conference, and under the guise of holding an Educational Conference turned the Muslims away from the Congress and violently preached against it.

Badr-ud-Din Tyabji's comparatively early death at the age of 62 (as against Sir Syed's hoary 85) at a critical juncture in national politics undoubtedly contributed to the fading of his influence on Muslim political ideology, and even from the memory of his correligionists. After his death the seeds of Muslim exclusiveness and suspicion planted by Sir Syed and carefully tended by the British (whom he had engaged, as it were, as his principal horticultural advisers) sprouted vigorously. There was no one, except the young Mr. Jinnah, of sufficient character ability and prescience to weed them out; even to arrest their further growth and spread. Abul Kalam Azad's influence in these days was more on religious and social issues than the political. And later when a frustrated Mr. Jinnah gave up the struggle, and indeed, himself became the spearhead of the separatist ideology among the Muslims, their fate as a united community in a united India was sealed. Maulana Azad fought a valiant but obviously losing battle against the same forces that

Badr-ud-Din Tyabji had to contend with during Sir Syed's days. Indeed, after the latter's death he had virtually succeeded in mastering them. This was vividly demonstrated by his triumphant success as President of the 7th session of the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental Education Conference founded by Sir Syed, from which he had hitherto held aloof, as its underlying purpose was to wean the Muslims away from the Congress. Now, through his force of character and power of persuasion he was able to change all this—the Conference became a truly educational movement, and took a lead in advocating educational and social movement, and took a lead in advocating educational and social reform, particularly in regard to Muslim women.

Azad, a sad man

Maulana Azad in his duel with the later-day Mr. Jinnah, unlike Badr-ud-Din Tyabji, was gravely handicapped by his inability to wield the western weapons of political controversy, of which Mr. Jinnah was such a consummate master. He lost the dialectical battle, as it was essentially fought in the corridors of power dominated by the British and Westernised Muslims. Only after the welter of blood and tears that followed Partition, did the Indian Muslims realise how right he had been, and how wrong Mr. Jinnah was. For the Maulana this only brought the grim satisfaction of being able to say "I told you so. Yoy did not listen to me" to the bewildered and frightened Muslims bereft of stable family life and denuded of property and patronage as a result of partition, who only the other day had been reviling and jeering him, but now clustered round him. He died a sad and thoroughly disillusioned man.

The Maulana's message and teachings however, that in political terms were directly in line if not descendants of those of Badr-ud-Din Tyabji, are gradually sinking in slowly but surely, not only in Muslim hearts, but in the conscience of the Indian nation. He was also fortunate in having in Jawaharlal Nehru a steadfast friend and political colleague, who cherished him in both life and death. No trace of rancour or rivalry, even when they disagreed, marred their relationship. As a result, Delhi is replete with monuments and institutions that commemorate the

Maulana's contribution to the creation of the ethos of Independent India.

No monument

Badr-ud-Din Tyabji was not so blessed. The grand Memorial Committee set up after his death soon disintegrated through petty disputes and misunderstandings. No monument was raised in his memory, and what he had stood for. Not even a street in Bombay of which he had been the pride for more than three decades is named after him.

That this has been the fate of one of the pioneers of secularism and social reform of India shows how far we lag behind in matching our practice in such matters with our professions.

M. Asaf Ali A Memorable Character

MIR MUSHTAQ AHMED

Delhi, the historic city, has given birth to several great men who played prominent role in our national and public life and have shone like stars on the Indian firmament. During the 19th century was born Asaf Ali who afterwards became barrister and a man of great eminence. He was a man of character—always to be remembered and followed. His memory will always remain enshrined in the hearts of the people of Delhi whom he loved and served all his life. He was an embodiment of Delhi's culture and traditions. A man of learning and refined taste, Mr. Asaf Ali dedicated his life to the service of the country and his fellow citizens. His outstanding qualities as a valiant freedom fighter and orator, a skilful parliamentarian and above all a noble statesman placed him among India's front rank national leaders. The standard of sacrifice and devotion to duty that he set will remain a source of inspiration to the present and the coming generations. The contribution made by Asaf Ali to the national struggle for freedom constitutes one of the most glorious chapters of our history.

Born on May 11, 1888 Asaf Ali belonged to one of the old and well to do families of Delhi. He had his early education in the Anglo-Arabic School and St. Stephen's College, Delhi. He was in England from 1909 to 1914 where he was called to the bar. During his studies in England, Asaf Ali contributed articles to leading Indian newspapers including the '*Bombay Chronicle*' of which he became a regular correspondent. On his return to India in 1914, he started practising law. Due to his forensic qualities Asaf Ali soon made his mark as a lawyer.

Asaf Ali joined the political struggle from 1916 onwards. He was associated with the Home Rule League of the late Annie Besant. He took a leading part in making arrangements for the Congress session in Delhi in 1918. The session was a historic one as it was symbolic of the country-wide resentment against the Rowlatt Act. He was also connected with the Khilafat Committee. The notable part played by Delhi in the non-cooperation movement in 1921-22 was largely due to the drive and organising ability of Asaf Ali.

It was during the Rowlatt Act agitation that Asaf Ali who was described as "sharp tongued by the bureaucrats was gagged by the then Chief Commissioner of Delhi, Mr. Malcolm Hailey by an order under the Defence of India Act. Soon after Asaf Ali was arrested along with the late Pandit Neki Ram Sharma of Bhiwani for addressing a meeting in the Lakshmi Narain Dharmshala for contravention of the order. Both were prosecuted but acquitted by the A.D.M. Delhi later. Asaf Ali's political activities in connection with the non-cooperation movement in 1921-22 resulted in his conviction and imprisonment for more than a year in 1922.

During the years from 1924 to 1928 there was a political void in Delhi. In this period Asaf Ali fought a grim battle against communalism and sectarianism. He married Aruna Ganguli in 1928 thus throwing a challenge to social obscurantism.

Member, working committee

Asaf Ali was appointed a member of the Congress Working Committee in 1940. He took part in the Civil Disobedience Movements of 1930-32 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He was imprisoned and served varying terms. In 1934 Asaf Ali was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly by a thumping majority under a system of joint electorates which was an indication of his popularity among all sections of the people. In the Central Assembly he was one of the leading figures of the Congress party, the main opposition. He served as the whip, secretary and the deputy leader of the party. Asaf Ali was one of those leaders who were in favour of using the forum of the Central Assembly for carrying on a struggle against foreign rule. He made a special study of military budgeting and soon

established his reputation as a conscientious parliamentarian and debator.

He was arrested along with other members of the Congress Working Committee on August 9, 1942 in Bombay and was detained for three years. After the release of leaders from Ahmed Nagar Jail, Asaf Ali organised the defence of the Indian National Army prisoners in 1945-46. He was the convener of the I.N.A. Defence Committee with which all the eminent lawyers of the country were associated. Asaf Ali remained the President of the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee from 1940 to 1946.

In Delhi Municipal Committee

Asaf Ali served as a member of the Municipal Committee for more than 20 years. In the beginning he was an independent member. But later he left the Congress group which carried on a ceaseless campaign against reactionary and communal forces. Asaf Ali was first to demand reform in the Municipal law governing the Delhi Municipal Committee which later on took the form of a demand for a corporation for Delhi.

In 1946 Asaf Ali joined the interim Government as Transport Minister. In 1947 he was appointed India's Ambassador to the USA. In that capacity he performed his duties with distinction till 1948 when he was given another important assignment as the sole representative of India at the United Nations. His scholarship, mannerism and quick grasp brought success to him in the field of diplomacy also.

Asaf Ali was appointed as Governor of Orissa in 1948. His counsel proved a great asset to the popular ministry. He served there till May 1952.

During the period of more than three years as Governor of Orissa he established contacts with the people and toned up the administration.

Later Asaf Ali was appointed India's ambassador to Switzerland. He was also accredited India's representative to the Vatican and to Austria. While at Berne Asaf Ali continued to advise the Indian delegation to the UNO. He died at his post at Berne on April 2, 1953 from heart attack. His body was flown to Delhi on April 7, 1953. The people of Delhi paid their homage

to the departed leader by joining the funeral procession in hundreds of thousands. His remains were laid to rest in his family graveyard of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia.

Poet and writer

Apart from Asaf Ali's works in the field of journalism, he was also an Urdu poet and writer and spoke Delhi's stylish Urdu. As a lawyer he always helped the political sufferers. He defended Sardar Bhagat Singh in the Assembly Bomb case. He also figured as a defence counsel in Karachi Bomb Case and the Punjab Governor's shooting case.

During the greater part of his eventful political career Asaf Ali was closely associated with such stalwarts as the late Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari and the late Dr. Sayed Hussain and Lala Desh Bandhu Gupta. There is hardly any sphere of our civic life which does not bear the impact of Shri Asaf Ali's personality and character.

Tributes

Dr. Zakir Husain as President of India paid his tribute to Asaf Ali in these words:

“Shri Asaf Ali's services to the nation were outstanding. He was in the forefront of the freedom movement as a political leader. He worked with great zeal and breadth of outlook as a member of the Central Legislature before Independence. As a member in the Interim Central Cabinet as our first Ambassador of the U.S.A. and as a Governor of Orissa he discharged his responsibilities with consummate skill and devotion. He was a leader loved and respected by all. On his death anniversary, I pay my tribute to this illustrious son of India”.

Our Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, also paid her tribute in the following words:

“Shri Asaf Ali worked for the country with ability and single minded devotion. Delhi will remember him with

special gratitude for the manner in which he kept the national flag flying in the most trying circumstances. He symbolised the old world culture and courtesy of Delhi yet was a friend of the poor and the champion of their cause. His memory will long be cherished”.

Asaf Ali was gifted with qualities of head and heart. He used to disarm the Government in the Central Legislature by his witty remarks. He had a dignified personality. He gave patient hearing to the poorest persons who visited him for removal of their grievances even when he was a minister. His cultured manners and sweet tongue attracted people towards him. He attached great importance to moral values. He respected all religions alike. He respected people irrespective of caste, colour and creed.

Mohammad Ali A Forgotten Patriot

DR SALEEM KIDWAI

We, Indians, are quite magnanimous in paying tributes to departed souls. Public meetings are organised quite often to commemorate martyrs of freedom. The careers and contributions of leading freedom fighters are highlighted frequently through mass media and books. Proposals are made to set-up memorials in various corners of the country. Handsome tributes are paid even to second rank leaders. But alas! no one pays any tribute or even remembers Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, whose contribution to the freedom struggle was second only to no one else's. At the public meetings, no one recalls the unique and historic role played by the great leader in the freedom movement. In the ever-increasing literature on national struggle, one rarely comes across the name of Mohammad Ali. There has been an unfortunate tendency to completely ignore the great and unforgettable contribution of this illustrious son of India.

Raisul-Ahrar Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar (1878-1931) was indeed among the very few known for fearless and selfless leadership and devotion to the cause of freedom. The name of Mohd. Ali, when he lived, had the power to rally round it forty crores of people in the undivided sub-continent. It was a name which was adored by the high and the low alike and was hailed by great leaders, writers, journalists and critics at a time of great crisis. He was the first political leader of India who was tried for sedition and who openly planned to make the Britons quit India. It was he who transformed the complacent group of the Congressites into a thundering organisation and made

the Indian National Congress a forum for a united Hindustani nation. It was he who shook the Muslims and inspired them with the passion for freedom. It was he who raised Gandhi to the position of a Mahatma and got him accepted as the spirit behind Hindu-Muslim unity. It was he who made Jawaharlal Nehru secretary of the All India Congress Committee during his Presidentship. It was he who had the proud distinction of presiding over the sessions of the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League and the Khilafat Conference.

God-fearing

Mohammad Ali was born on 12 December, 1878 in a respectable and cultured Muslim family at Rampur and died on January 3, 1931, in London. Mohammad Ali was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth. His father Abdul Ali Khan expired when Mohammad Ali was a mere infant. His elder brothers were in the preliminary stages of education. The entire responsibility of bringing him up devolved upon the young widow. Mohammad Ali's mother (popularly known as '*Bi Amman*') rose to the occasion and with all her motherly love and care, she inspired her son with a spirit of truthfulness, honesty and devotion to God. Mohammad Ali's life, from cradle to grave, demonstrates what a profound and lasting impact the religious instruction and training received at the mother's lap can produce in young minds. That is why throughout his life Mohammad Ali continued to fear God. And because he feared God Almighty above, he feared none down below.

Mohammad Ali's mother was deeply religious, she was also farsighted and enlightened. She sent her son first to Bareilly and then to Aligarh for studies, though orthodox Muslims were deadly against English education in those days. She was perhaps the first Muslim woman in the town who sent her boy for education in English. For her it meant strong opposition from the uncle of the boy; for the boy it meant the none-too-welcome title of an "infidel."

Brilliant debator

At M.A.O. College, Aligarh, under the brotherly supervi-

sion and patronage of his elder brother, Shaukat Ali, Mohammad Ali took keen interest in extracurricular activities. Soon, he made himself quite popular and distinguished himself as a brilliant debator, poet and writer. He was still attached to activities other than academic as has been described by Sir Mohammad Yakub, one of his friends. "Rarely the text books had been seen in the hands of Mohammad Ali but generous nature had blessed him with a brilliant brain and intelligence." Another schoolmate Syed Sajjad Haider, recollecting his student days, said:

"When I joined the 9th standard in M. A. O. Collegiate School at Aligarh, Shaukat Ali Khan had his younger brother Mohammad Ali with him. The boy was intelligent in the classroom, but outside became quarrelsome in a good natured manner and was reputed to be a regular all-rounder. Mohammad Ali in his limited world was a dominant figure among the students of his own age... He was prominent for his English. We both after passing the entrance examination joined college, and this was the place from where Mohammad Ali got the qualities of independent thinking and working. He generally used to differ with the professors and spoke in the union on topics which irritated them. His speeches were forceful, the language plain and very impressive for a young man of his age." In short, as a student in the active Aligarh of those days Mohammad Ali was fully alert and alive and participated in every sphere of college life."

In the classroom he was intelligent and brilliant. In the students union he was the best speaker and a forceful debator, a promising writer and a poet of standing. He gave full expression to his radical views in the college debates much to the embarrassment of the European staff of his almahmader as well as the British Government. He came to be known as a revolutionary. He was also a well-known figure in the cricket and football teams in the college. With such a bright career Mohammad Ali appeared for graduation. He obtained his B.A. degree at the age of 18, topping the list of successful candidates in the Allahabad University (which in those days examined the alumni of all UP Colleges) and, thus brought credit and fame not only to himself but to his alma mater.

At Oxford

After this grand success Mohammad Ali went to England for higher studies and joined Oxford. At Oxford, he took an Honours Degree in Modern History. At the behest of his "Big Brother" Mohammad Ali had also attempted to enter the much-coveted Indian Civil Service. However, providence had earmarked him for a nobler task than to be merely a member of the I.C.S. The result was that he could not pass it. During the course of his stay at Oxford, Mohammad Ali preferred to devote most of his time in going through the pages of history and literature and with the patriotic spirit which he imbibed at Aligarh, endeavoured to acquire more of such knowledge as would prepare him for his destined life. His failure at the I.C.S. examination was, however, going to be the precursor of a career of Mohammad Ali which would enable him to leave indelible marks of his greatness on the sands of time. After four years in England Mohammad returned back to India in 1902.

On return to India, Mohammad Ali, in his quest for work turned first of all to his first love, Aligarh. He offered his services as a professor to his college. His application was strongly opposed by the principal, Sir Theodore Morrison, who though recognizing Mohammad Ali's abilities and qualifications, did not consider it safe to have a man of his independent character and spirit on the staff of the college. However, there was no scarcity of Government jobs for the Aligarhians and there could have been none particularly for a brilliant youth of Mohammad Ali's calibre. The Rampur state authorities lost no time in inviting him to serve his fatherland. He was appointed chief educational officer. But he had to leave the service because of palace intrigues within a year. Then he joined the Baroda State. For about seven years he served that state as opium officer and as commissioner of Navsari with a devotion and distinction which won him the confidence of the ruler of Baroda State.

Fish out of water

With his abilities as a thinker and writer and his dreams of service to his people, Mohammad Ali found himself like a fish out of water in a princely state. Despite his preoccupation with his official duties, he managed time to contribute articles on

topics of public interest to newspapers and periodicals. At last, he made a momentous decision to become a journalist. This was a serious departure especially for a comfortable district officer, who had no special claim or training to venture on this hazardous profession. Nevertheless, nature had endowed him with extraordinary abilities for journalism. Mohammad Ali decided to switch over to journalism because he felt, under the circumstances, this was the only way to serve his country. In his incomplete autobiography, *My Life: A Fragment* Mohammad Ali writes: "The reason which so irresistibly impelled me to take to journalism was that the affairs of my country at the juncture made it the only avenue through which I could prove of any appreciable use". In 1911 began his journalistic career at Calcutta—the seat of Imperial Government. He started the "*Comrade*"—"Comrade of all and partisan to none", as he put it in the very first editorial.

The Comrade

Born in abject poverty, the *Comrade* took the journalistic world of India by storm. It was hailed as the new star in the firmament of Indian journalism. It criticized the British Government with characteristic frankness. Because of its bold views, flawless language and thought, the *Comrade* soon became a front-rank organ throughout the country. Through the paper, which was an English weekly, Mohammad Ali sought to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together. To quote from the first editorial of the *Comrade*, "We deeply feel many hazards of increasing controversy, between races and races, creeds and creeds and earnestly desire a better understanding between the contending elements of the body-politic of India."

He also edited the paper *Hamdard*, which was an Urdu daily started in 1914 from Delhi. Realising that it was not enough to fight with the pen alone, Mohammad Ali came out in the field and joined the ranks. He was interned in 1915 for five years. After his release in 1919, he joined the Indian National Congress. He collaborated with Mahatma Gandhi during the Non-Cooperation Movement and founded Jamia Millia Islamia. In 1921, he received a heavy sentence for

spreading sedition. Presidentship of the Muslim League, the Khilafat Conference and the Indian National Congress came one after another.

Devotion to Gandhi

To understand and appreciate the significance of Moham-mad Ali's invaluable contribution, it is pertinent to keep in view general conditions in India before the Non-Cooperation Movement. Atrocities in recruitment campaign, soaring prices, insults and hardships had filled the people of India with rage. The arrogance of the victor and the rejecting of the solemn pledges climaxed in the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh. The task before the Indian leaders was to link up various currents and direct them into a single unified anti-imperialistic struggle. Mohammad Ali made notable contribution in unifying those currents. He played a vital role in cementing different segments of society. He was farsighted enough to realise that India could not achieve independence until the two major communities unite and fight under one banner. He worked ceaselessly for Hindu-Muslim unity. He had a firm base in his community. Such was his popularity among the Muslim masses that the bulk of Muslims joined the Indian National Congress en bloc. This was the greatest achievement of Mohd. Ali that he transformed the Congress into a truly mass national organisation. It was mainly due to his tireless efforts that the Muslim masses accepted Gandhi's leadership.

Through his daily *Hamdard* he introduced Gandhiji to Urdu reading public and lavished praises on him as a "general fighting for right and truth" and the "young man in whom India takes pride." At the public meetings and Khilafat conferences, he praised Gandhi as a "great soul whose advent in Indian politics brought a great revolution. The spirit of Indian politics greatly changed since the coming of Mahatma. Like our General, we are engaged in a war unto death." Such remarks greatly elevated Gandhiji to a very high and enviable position in the eyes of enthusiastic Muslims. Consequently, there emerged an image of Gandhi as the first Hindu leader who commanded the allegiance of the tallest Muslim leaders which evoked similar response from non-Muslims also. It is evident that Mohammad

Ali had successfully linked up Hindus and Muslims for a revolutionary struggle. He then undertook a tour of the whole country with Gandhiji and his brother Shaukat Ali. This trio constituted the most effective and popular leadership. Everywhere they were received with mass ovation. Mohammad Ali's fiery speeches which were full of sincerity, sentiments and emotions appealed to the millions who listened to them and became zealous supporters of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Boycott of colleges and schools

The most hotly contested item of the Non-Cooperation Movement, (boycott of national institutions) opposed with full force by stalwarts like C.R. Das, Jinnah, M. M. Malaviya, Lajpat Rai etc., even after the Calcutta Congress, was taken up by Mohammad Ali. With Mahatma Gandhi and Shaukat Ali, he visited his alma mater to persuade young Aligarh students to join the Non-Cooperation Movement. His speech in the College Students's Union set the college ablaze. After his emotional speech the proposition to give up studies was carried by a majority. Hundreds of young students of M.A.O. College headed by the Union President responded to his call and joined the movement. It was the first student response to the call of Non-Cooperation. It was the first time that students, as a body, were drawn into national struggle. Among the leaders, Mohammad Ali alone stuck to Aligarh and faced single-handed the attacks of his opponents. The victory at Aligarh undoubtedly gave additional vigour to the movement. It was a historic event whose credit goes to Mohammad Ali.

In 1921, Mohammad Ali received a heavy sentence for spreading sedition and dissatisfaction in the Indian Army. Mohammad Ali's speech during the Karachi trial became historic for its militant fervour and its defiant challenge to the government of the day.

At Amritsar Congress

The steadfastness and sacrifices had endeared Mohammad Ali to all sections of people. Even common men, both Hindus

and Muslims, loved him and visited him during his internment. This love and respect found full expression at the Amritsar Congress. In recognition to Mohammad Ali's great services and supreme sacrifices rendered to the national cause, he was elected as the Congress President. This was the greatest national honour. In his presidential address delivered at the annual Congress Session at Coconada in 1923, Mohammad Ali advocated nationalistic policy. He made an eloquent plea for Hindu-Muslim unity. He declared: "One thing is certain, and it is this, that neither can the Hindus exterminate the Musalmans today nor can the Musalmans get rid of the Hindus. If they cannot get rid of one another the only thing to do is to settle down to cooperate with one another...and while the Musalmans must remove all doubts from the Hindu mind about their desire for swaraj for its own sake and their readiness to resist all foreign aggression, the Hindus must similarly remove from the Muslim mind all apprehensions that the Hindu majority is synonymous with Muslim servitude.....without a proper and lasting settlement of this question (Hindu-Muslim unity) we can effect nothing."

As Congress President Mohammad Ali, alongwith Maulana Azad succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation between the pro-changers and no-changers, the two warring groups over the issue of council entry and thus saved the Congress from split. He recognised the talents of young Jawaharlal Nehru and selected him as his chief aide and appointed him as the General Secretary of the Congress despite Nehru's reluctance. Mohammad Ali was thus instrumental in making Jawaharlal Nehru an all India figure and had great affection for him while Nehru held Mohammad Ali in highest esteem.

Mohammad Ali carried out incessant struggle for Hindu-Muslim unity. He fired the imagination of his countrymen and won their allegiance to the cause he had given them. He wrote: "I had long been convinced that there in this country of hundreds of millions of human-beings, intensely attached to religion, and yet infinitely split up into communities, sects and denominations, providence has created for us the mission of solving a unique problem and working out a new synthesis. It is nothing less than Federation of Faiths. The lines of cleavage are too deeply marked to permit a unity other than federal and

yet the cleavage is not territorial or racial in character but religious (*My Life: A Fragment*, page 35). It is to this synthesis that one must look for an explanation of Mohammad Ali's life and work.

Pan-Islamism or unity of the Muslim world was another cause very dear to Mohammad Ali. He had an intense desire for the solidification of Muslim fraternity. But his stand was different from the die-hard champions of communalism and reaction. According to Mahatma Gandhi 'Mohammad Ali's Pan-Islamism was not anti-Hindu.'

Islam and India

For Mohammad Ali Islam and India were in no way antithetic. They only indicated two equally important spheres of action. There was no contradiction or basic conflict in being a good Muslim and in being a good Indian. He once said: "Where God commands I am a Muslim first, a Muslim second and a Muslim last, and nothing but a Muslim. But where India is concerned, I am an Indian first, an Indian second and an Indian last." According to him Muslimness did not in any way nullify Indianness. India was one circle in which he moved: he worked and died for it. Islam was another circle in which he moved: he worked and died. Living in one circle, if he found that his brethren in the other were in trouble, it gave him the same pains as if his own child were on death bed. He harmoniously blended his love for Islam and his love for India.

Mohammad Ali parted company with the Congress in 1928 on account of the adoption of Nehru Report which had recommended dominion status and not complete independence for India. In a characteristic parody of the words used by Government street-criers to announce the dual sovereignty of India before notifying any Government order, Mohammad Ali said, "under the proposed regime of the Nehru scheme of Mr. Gandhi the Government street-criers will announce the new dual sovereignty of India by declaring the formula, "Khalq Khuda Ki, Mulk British Ka, Hukum Mahasabha Bahadur Ka" (People belong to God, Country belongs to the British, Government belongs to the Hindu Mahasabha Bahadur). He became a bitter critic of the Congress leadership and accused it of being

pro-Hindu. Presiding at a public meeting in 1930 Mohammad Ali alleged: "Mr. Gandhi is working under the influence of communalist Hindu Mahasabha. He is fighting for the supremacy of Hinduism and the subversion of Muslims."

He further charged: "The Musalmans have been oppressed and persecuted by the excesses of the Hindu majority in the last ten years but Mr. Gandhi never tried to improve matters or condemn Hindu terrorism against Muslims. He never denounced the movements of Suddi and Sanghthan which openly and clearly aimed at annihilation of Muslims and Islam in India."

Love for country

Nevertheless Mohammad Ali retained his love for the country. He earnestly believed in the freedom of India. His heroic fight for freedom continued with growing years and failing health. His last act of service to his motherland was his participation in the Round Table Conference at London. The old man who was suffering from a dozen serious diseases got himself transported on a stretcher to the ship and went seven thousand miles of land and sea to secure India's freedom. Sick in body, unable even to stand on his feet, sitting in a chair Mohammad Ali made in the plenary session the last and the best speech of his career. It was in the course of this historic speech that he uttered the memorable words: "I don't want to return to a slave country. Give my country independence or give me a grave here." His prophetic words came out to be true. The British Government did not give freedom to India but Mohammad Ali won a grave in a free country. He died in London on January 4, 1931 within four weeks of this memorable speech. He was buried at the foot of the grave of the prophets of old in Jerusalem.

Mohammad Ali belonged to that rare band of men who suffer and die so that others may live in freedom and happiness. It is really ironical that today no one remembers this great soul of India who had dedicated his entire life to the cause of freedom. Are we Indians an ungrateful nation?

Dr. M. A. Ansari— A True Symbol of Hindu- Muslim Unity

L. DEWANI

The Simon Commission's recommendations had caused great disappointment not only to Congress men but to all Muslims in the country. Sensing the mood of their compatriots some of the leading nationalist Muslim leaders had seriously begun to rally support for the national cause by trying to bring all patriotic Muslims under a common banner. It was sometimes in the middle of 1929 that persons like Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Dr. M.A. Ansari and a few other Muslim leaders tried to form the National Muslim Party.

Giving a call to his Muslim brethren to join the party, Dr. Ansari, in a statement to the press, on July 17, 1929, said: "Individuals have undoubtedly been working in the spirit of the party, but organised and concerted action by Musalmans as a body has been lacking. The community must be made to participate effectively in the common struggle for freedom... . Let it not be said that Muslims with their great Islamic traditions of freedom and chivalry failed their Motherland at a critical and turning point in its history."

Unshaken faith

It is a sad commentary on our past history that the efforts of such patriotic souls did not give a healthy direction to politics. Dr. Ansari, however, till his end did not allow his faith in the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity to be shaken. He, however, differed from Gandhiji and other Congressmen who thought that civil disobedience movement would help achieve

the unity among the major communities in the country apart from weakening the defences of the alien rule. When Gandhiji started the Salt Satyagraha in 1930, Ansari thought that the main issue confronting the country, the achievement of unity among the Hindus and the Muslims, had been shelved. Commenting on the developments following the unity conferences of 1927 and 1928 and the recommendations of the Motilal Nehru Committee report, Dr. Ansari said in a statement issued sometime in the middle of the year 1934 that "My views for holding these views were that we were not ready for a country-wide mass movement of this nature, that there were great chances of the non-violent campaign being submerged by breaking out of violence and lastly that the only sanction necessary for the success of a non-violent campaign, i.e. Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity, was wanting. The settlement of this question would have given us unique position and power both in the country and outside". He said: "It would have been impossible to withstand a united demand made on behalf of every section of the people of India at the Round Table Conference. In the eventuality however of such a demand being turned down, a campaign of independence started by a united India would have had the moral support of the world public opinion and the combined political and material support of the entire Indian public."

True symbol of unity

To Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ansari was the true symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. According to him, Dr. Ansari's very staunchness and intimate knowledge of Islam had made him a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity, and along with Hakim Ajmal Khan, he had essentially become a symbol of that unity and understanding between the two communities.

His ancestors having migrated to India in the first half of the fourteenth century from the land of the birth of the Prophet, they had settled in Yusufpur in Ghazipur district of U.P. and it was there that Dr. Ansari was born on Christmas day in the year 1880. After his early religious education at home, Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari was sent to Hyderabad to receive university education. After graduation in medical science from

Madras Medical College, Dr. Ansari proceeded to England for higher education on a Nizam state scholarship. Having got his L.R.C.P. and M.R.C.P. in 1903, he qualified for M.D. and M.S. in 1905, topping the list of successful candidates, by virtue of which he was the only Indian to be appointed Registrar, Lock Hospital, London. The Charing Cross Hospital, London acknowledged his services in the field of surgery by opening a ward in his name.

His love for his poor and suffering countrymen was too great to keep him away from rendering them the service they needed. He returned home after serving in England for a couple of years. In India, he spurned many attractive offers made to him by the heads of princely states. He wanted to serve the poor and ordinary men. He set up his practice in Delhi and till the end of his life was serving the people with compassion and love. The money he earned from his rich clients was used for national work. Among the numerous beneficiaries of Dr. Ansari's munificence the Jamia Millia Islamia, a national institution started in 1920 in the wake of the non-cooperation movement, enjoyed his fostering care and attention. In the words of Gandhiji, Dr. Ansari was the poor man's physician, if he was also that of the princes.

Drawn to politics

Though he had become absorbed in his professional work, from the early start of his career a person like Dr. Ansari, with an awakened conscience and keen sensibilities, could not have remained unaffected long by the degraded state of his countrymen. He was among the first of the few western educated persons in northern India who were drawn into political activity in the first decade of this century. His clear thinking and transparent sincerity had lent great dignity and purposefulness to the politics of those early days.

Having sensed the danger that communal feelings inflamed by organisations like Muslim League and the Khilafat Committee could engulf the country with, Dr. Ansari had dissociated himself from them by early 1926. From that time onwards, the main mission of Dr. Ansari's life appeared to have been to promote communal harmony and consciously try

to reduce the area of misunderstanding and distrust between the Hindus and Muslims.

In the last few years of his life, it pained him very much to see that though the desire for freeing the country from the bondage of slavery was there what kept it from being active and compelling was their "having lost themselves in a wilderness of conflicting aims on the one hand and an attractive variety of fanciful programmes on other." Addressing a youth conference in 1929, Dr. Ansari gave expression to his anguished feelings when he said, "Loyalty to the cause of national freedom has perhaps, without intending it, become subject to loyalty to doubtful communal interests." While regretting deeply the growing feeling of communalism among the Sikhs and the Muslims, Dr. Ansari also questioned the wisdom of majority community's clinging too fast and too unrealistically to general political and constitutional theories. He often wondered as to what will be the Swaraj if it was won without achieving the necessary concomitant of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Constituent Assembly

Dr. Ansari believed that the best answer to the Communal Award announced by the British Government in 1932 could be the convening of a constituent assembly which could freely discuss the question of representation of various communities and arrive at an amicable solution. He, therefore, wanted that the government should be pressurized to convene the Constituent Assembly for "without it an immediate objective our policy becomes devoid of any constructive contribution and our programme lifeless and impractical."

After the suspension of the civil disobedience movement in the summer of 1933, it was given to him to give a lead to the country and to the Congress to revive the Swaraj Party and contest the elections to the central legislature in 1934. The virtue of the lead given by him was further evinced by the brilliant success the Congress had attained at the assembly elections throughout the country. It also gave a lie to the impression that the disunity in the Congress ranks and the policy of repression practised by the British Government during the civil disobedience movement had rendered it weak and demoralised. Its inactivity

was mistaken for its lifelessness by the unbelievers.

When he urged the Congressmen to enter the legislature, he pointed out to them that one vital issue before the country was self-determination, and with the electors' verdict in their favour, the Congressmen inside the legislature will be able to do much to make the right of self-determination, with all its implications in the matter of the future constitution for free India and that would also enable them to translate into legislative measures the various programmes of national reconstruction based on the most urgent economic requirements of the country. He had given the right direction to the Congressmen and the Congress with its moral boosted by the 1934 elections to the central legislature, went on to achieve still more spectacular victories in the elections held in February-March 1937 for the provincial assemblies.

His Legacy

His sudden death in May 1936 prevented him from seeing the Congress winning the mandate from the people in 1937 elections for carrying out the programme, chalked out by him, from inside the legislatures. The good work done by the Congress ministries in seven provinces during the twentyeight months of office from July 1937 to October 1939 carried the stamp of Dr. Ansari's vision and farsightedness. The Congress was able to bring many radical changes in the economic and social spheres as visualised by Dr. Ansari.

Hakeem Ajmal Khan— A Champion of National Integration

QAZI ARSHAD MASOOD GANDHI

Hakeem Ajmal Khan was a "Courtier Patriot" and an "Elder Statesman" who had Hindu-Muslim unity as the breath of his nostrils. He was regarded by Gandhiji as a "Great Musalman and equally a Great Indian"; by Pandit Motilal Nehru as one of India's "most trusted and valiant sons"; by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as one of the "stoutest supporters" of the Congress; by C. Rajagopalachari as "one of India's greatest patriots and workers in the cause of unity". Mrs. Indira Gandhi called him as one who "strove to remedy not only person's illness, but the nation's illness".

He was born in Delhi in 1863 and was the youngest of the three sons of Haziq-ul-Mulk, Hakeem Ghulum Mehmood Khan. He received his education as well as training in *Sib* (Unani system of medicine) in his home. He gathered great professional experience. He also wrote articles in *Akmal-ul-Akhbar* (a newspaper which his father had started sometimes between 1865 and 1870), and thereby developed maturity of understanding about political matters. In 1892, he went to Rampur State to stay there as the personal physician of the Nawab. There he came in contact with Aligarh Movement and acquired knowledge of national politics.

After his father's death, he returned to Delhi in 1902 to look after the family business. His professional concern for the welfare of men packed his heart and soul with robust humanism. After an attack of *angina pectris* he went for a change to Iraq.

In August 1905 partition of Bengal was announced to stem

the tide of political awakening by means of the instrument of Divide and Rule. The British agents also whipped up Hindi-Urdu controversy in the United provinces for sowing seeds of communal discord. The Muslim intellectuals led by Nawab Mohsinul Mulk and Nawab Tiqarul Mulk decided to give up isolation from national politics enjoined by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Their delegation, which included Hakeem Saheb, presented a memorandum to the Viceroy at Simla. It was then decided to start a political party. When the Muslim Educational Conference met in Dacca in 1906, Nawab of Dacca, Sir Saleemullah moved a resolution seconded by Hussan Saheb for founding a political organization of Indian Muslims called the All India Muslim League. The League aimed at encouraging loyalty to the Government, safeguarding the political rights of Muslims, presenting with moderation the demands of Muslims before the Government and establishing friendly relations with other communities in India. He even made arrangements for instructions in the Ayurvedic system of medicine in the *Madarsa Tibbiya*, Delhi, which his father had started in 1823.

Visit to Europe

In 1911 he went to Europe and made friends with two great patriots: Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari and Abdul Majeed Khwaja.

Soon after his return to India, Italy attacked Tripoli and Britain declared her neutrality in the War. The Muslims in India suspected that Europe was conspiring to divide Turkey and other Muslim countries. The suspicion further deepened due to the Balkan Wars in 1912, and this went to transform the Muslim politics in India, and young Muslims abandoned the traditional boycott policy of Aligarh School.

Hakeem Saheb alongwith Maulana Mohd. Ali and other leaders requested people to raise a fund for Turkey. They also despatched a medical mission to Turkey under Dr. M. A. Ansari.

Hakeem Saheb and many other leaders of the Muslim League soon began to realise that their demand for a fair deal for Turkey would gain strength if they received support from the Congress. Similarly, the Congress leaders also began feeling

that disintegration of Turkey would only mean a tightening of the British grip over India. Thus they were drawn closer to each other.

Congress President Bishen Narain Dar and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu addressed the delegates to the session of the Muslim League in Lucknow in 1913. Muslim League President Sir Ibrahim Rahmatullah spoke at Agra in 1913 about the "heriitage of 30 crore Indians"—not of "Muslims"!

In 1916 Gandhiji called upon the Hindus to give support to the Muslims in their demand for a better deal for Turkey. The Congress and League held their sessions in Lucknow in 1916 and Hindu-Muslim unity was further strengthened by the conclusion of "Lucknow Pact". This situation campelled the Government to pacify the people with a new package of constitutional reforms. The growing friendship between Hindus and Muslims made the Government uneasy about its own future. So it took recourse to the arsenal of Divide and Rule. Bihar was the scene of a communal holocaust. But the leaders succeeded in preventing the situation from worsening.

Congress and League

The Congress and League held their sessions in Amritsar in 1919. Hakeem Saheb so ably put the Muslim viewpoint on religious and political affairs [before the Congress leaders that they agreed to support the Muslims in their hour of concern for Turkey. Hakeem Saheb successfully pleaded with Muslims to stop, as a mark of respect to their Hindu brethren; the slaughter of cow. *

In 1920 when Gandhiji gave a call for non-cooperation with the Government Hakeem Saheb returned to the Government the title of Haziq-ul-Mulk and the medal of *Qaisar-e-Hind*. The Jamait-ul-Ulema conferred on him the title of *Maseeh-ul-Mulk*.

Hakeem Saheb, endorsing Gandhiji's call for non-cooperation, urged the students of the Muhammadan-Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh (now the Aligarh Muslim University) to boycott their classes. About 300 students including Dr. Zakir Hussain Khan (who later became the President of India) responded to the call in order to provide "national" education

to them; Jamia Millia Islamia was started at Aligarh with Hakeem Saheb as the Chancellor.

Hakeem Saheb had thus become a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. When the Hindu Mahasabha [held its session in Delhi in 1921, he was chosen as the president of the Reception Committee. Hakeem Saheb even took Swami Shradhanand to the Jama Masjid to address the Muslims.

The Congress decided to hold its session in 1921 in Ahmedabad. C.R. Das, who was to preside at the session was arrested. Therefore, Gandhiji and others requested Hakeem Saheb to substitute for C.R. Das in his Presidential address. Hakeem Saheb adopted a tough line towards the Government and did not remain a "loyalist".

The growing unity between Hindus and Muslims perturbed the Government. Its agents writing under the fictitious name of "Hindu Samaj" tried a wedge between the two communities. Hakeem Saheb's image was sought to be tarnished so that he could not have mass appeal. The tricks worked and disturbances broke out in Multan. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya started "sangathan" movement as a defence mechanism. But it merely exacerbated the feelings already injured. Therefore, when Hakeem Saheb and other leaders went to Multan to restore communal harmony, they were not successful.

Khilafat

At this time Mustafa Kamal Pasha defeated the Greeks. Muslims were very happy. The British agents took this opportunity to drive them away from Congress by saying that the purpose for which they had come nearer to the Congress having been fulfilled no need was left to continue the alliance. The Muslims succumbed to the ruse and lost touch with the Congress. The vacuum so created became a breeding ground for elements dangerous to the communal harmony.

Many Indian leaders were in jails in Punjab. The Governor of Punjab paid a visit to the jail in which Hakim Saheb's close associate, Swami Shradhanand was imprisoned. After the interview with the Governor he was released before time. After his release he started in January 1923, "Bharat Shuddhi" Movement which encouraged the emergence of militant organi-

zations like "Mahavir Dal" and "Sewak Guard". The entire atmosphere was rife with suspicion, hatred and bickering. Communal passions ran to dizzy heights. Hakim Saheb and Gandhiji tried to stop the senseless orgy of violence. But they were subjected to scathing criticism by the fanatic and communal press and had to beat a retreat disheartened and disillusioned. At this stage Gandhi used his moral weapon against the demon of communal riots. He started his 21-day fast for restoration of peace. When his condition deteriorated, leaders of all communities assembled in Delhi and worked for the return of normalcy.

But the respite was short and the country relapsed into the old bad ways. Kohat witnessed disturbances. Gandhiji and Maulana Shaukat Ali visited the place and met their co-religionists and prepared reports on the basis of what they heard from them. Naturally their findings were diametrically opposed to each other. Therefore, Hakeem Saheb advised them not to publish such incomplete reports. But they would not listen. The reports only caused permanent estrangement between Gandhiji and added fuel to the fire.

Hakeem Saheb went to Europe in April 1925 for treatment. He returned to India in September 1925 only to find the country still burning. He found himself ineffective in extinguishing the fire. Gandhiji also felt helpless.

Advice on policy

On 7-8 May 1926 he made a statement in Delhi calling upon the majority community not to overreact on the indiscretion of Muslims because such a situation would only push the nation away from the goal of Swaraj. This statement caused a furore and even Swami Shraddhanand condemned his old friend and associate. There was tension everywhere. In order to reduce it Pandit Motilal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad issued an appeal to the "nationalists" to eschew "communalism". This plan received support from many leaders. But due to the opposition of Swami Shraddhanand it fizzled. Hakeem Saheb unreservedly condemned the incident. But this could not prevent the country from plunging further deep into the abyss of communal frenzy. Many attempts were made by

Congress and Muslim League for restoration of unity. But they did not meet with success. Hakeem Saheb remained wedded to the Congress ideology of national integration.

In early December 1927 Hakeem Saheb's health began to deteriorate. Disregarding the advice of his friends, he undertook an arduous journey to Bombay to meet King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan. After his return to Delhi on 26 December 1927 he went to see Nawab Saheb of Rampur. In the night of 28-29 he breathed his last.

8 | Amir Khusrau The Parrot of India

DR. MOHAMMAD YASIN

Learned and a litterateur, musician, singer and dancer, humourist and courtier, and "the greatest of all ancient and modern poets", according to a contemporary historian, Ziauddin Barani, Amir Khusrau, whose original name was Yaminuddin Abul Hasan was born at Patiali or Patiyali, a small town in Etah district of the state of Uttar Pradesh in 1253 A.D.

He was the second of his three brothers. His father Amir Saifuddin Mahmud, a Turk, belonged to the Hazara-i-i-Lachin tribe of Central Asia who later on migrated to India and settled here. Khusrau's mother was of Indian origin being the daughter of Imád-ul-Mulk, an important official during the reign of Shamsuddin Iltutmish and enjoyed the greatest amount of power and influence during the time of Ghiasuddin Balban.

Amir Saifuddin was a military chief. Though himself illiterate he was very much particular to see that his children were properly educated and groomed. Khusrau was sent to maktab at a very early age and some scholars were engaged to teach him at home also. The bright boy made rapid progress with his studies, but he was born a poet and had imbibed an extraordinary passion for poetry from his very cradle. While, then, the teachers dinned into his ears the sonorous verses of the Holy Quran, his young mind, sensitive to the beauties of nature around him, roved far away to the land of imagination and fancy, and his bright eyes wandered away from the dull pages of Panj-Ganj of Hidaya to some small latticed window of the maktab through which he could see the green trees, the blue

Indian sky, the birds hopping about and filling the air with their melodious twitterings.

An orphan

The boy was now firmly set on the path of poetry and he proceeded with vigour apace. But very soon he had to face the first great sorrow of his life. His fond father, always so solicitous for the welfare and education, died leaving Khusrau an orphan at the age of eight. His father, however, by his care and concern had already engrafted in his young mind the value and importance of learning, and when the boy had become an old man and his fame had seized the four quarters of the globe, he could not but acknowledge with gratitude: 'In my clay is the seed planted by him, and it is now blooming forth.'

Amir Khusrau was born a courtier just as he was born a poet. Blessed with a long life and endowed with versatile qualities of head and heart Khusrau flourished at the Muslim Court during the period beginning from Iltutmish and coming down to the reign of Ghiasuddin Tughlaq. He was connected with seven kings. He was their courtier as well as companion in welfare. Khusrau had no political rivals but he did not forgive any person who came forward as an enemy and dared cross his path. "He lived in a stirring time", when the Mongols were making reiterated efforts to work their way into India. He also fell a prisoner into their hands, as we are told by Ziauddin Barani.

A household word

Amir Khusrau's name has always been a household word in India, and most of us must have become familiar with it in the earliest childhood through his Hindi songs and conundrums. Amir Khusrau's mother tongue was Turkish and Persian but he was well-versed in Arabic and Sanskrit (Hindi, Hindui) as well and he was proud of his Hindi: "I am an Indian Turk and can answer you in Hindi: I have no Egyptian sugar (i.e. Arabic) to talk of Arabia." It is believed that he wrote about half a million couplets (lines). He also wrote in Hindi, though unfort-

unately we have no collection of his Hindi poems. His poems charmed the populace and entranced no exaggeration to say in the nobles and princes. In the words of Sleeman he sang extempore to his lyre while the greatest and the fariest watched his lips to catch the expression as they came warm from his soul. The eloquence and sweetness of his verses soon earned for him the title *Tuti-i-Hind*, the Parrot of India. A notable feature of the pre-Mughal India was the rise of a number of literary societies in various parts of the country. The lead in the formation of these societies was given by Prince Muhammad, son of Sultan Balban, who founded the first literary society whose meeting place was his own palace and whose president was Amir Khusrau, his tutor and the most prominent Indo-Persian poet of the day.

Music

In the early days of Islam music suffered in the same ways as painting not so much on the same ground but probably because it tended to dominate human mind so much as to render it incapable of thinking of anything else. It was perhaps on account of its too powerful attraction that music was discouraged in the beginning. Despite this discouragement, however, human nature proved too strong and the art began to be cultivated in the same way and with the same, if not greater, zeal as painting. Religious sanction when sought was soon found in the *Hadis*, recommending *Tilawat* or reading of the Quran with a sweet voice. The contact of Islam with Iran, where music was most popular, and the influence of Sufis (Muslim mystics), who believed in the efficacy of music as a means of elevating the soul and as an aid to spiritual progress, brought about a great change in the attitude of Musalmans towards this art and went a long way in wiping of the stigma attached to it. The position was further simplified when Muslims settled down in India and found music occupying a high place in the scheme of Indian social and religious life. The result was that though divine service in mosques continued to be performed on orthodox lines, without extraneous aids of music either vocal or instrumental, the art became so popular that musicians began to loom large on almost all festive occasions.

The Sufis' fondness for music brought into vogue the practice of holding semi-religious congregations, where songs of a divine love were sung by professional singers.

With rare exceptions the Muslim rulers of India were exceedingly fond of music, vocal as well as instrumental. They kept a regular company of singers and instrumental performers at their courts and listened to their melodies in their leisure hours. Music provided a most favourite pleasure and pastime. The activities of Amir Khusrau, "the Prince of poets", were not confined to literary sphere. It is said that on the occasion of every convivial party that his patron gave to the companions he cheered up the august assembly by reciting a new poem and singing a fresh song. His rapturous melodies surpassed those of his contemporary Gopal Naik, the master musician attached to the Court of Vijayanager. He is reputed to have invented the *Qawwālī* mode of singing—a judicious mixture of Indo-Persian models, which later on gained a great popularity among Indian Muslims, Khusrau was at home in instrumental music as well. He introduced the Sitar, which was an improvement on the Vina.

His works

Amir Khusrau was one of those lucky authors who live long enough to see their fame spread far and wide, to have the satisfaction of their worth being recognised by their contemporaries and to be able to visualise the prospect of an ever increasing popularity and renown down to the depths of time among generations and nations yet unborn. He had, moreover, the good fortune of being able to collect and arrange most of his works during his life-time. With an extraordinary genius for poetry Khusrau combined an almost supernatural energy and an indefatigable capacity for work, he did the work of editing his own compositions with a thoroughness and care that cannot but excite our admiration. There is a considerable amount of discrepancy among various versions given by biographers as to the number and volume of Khusrau's work but what we now possess are quite a monument both in quality and quantity.

Among Khusrau's forty-five known and listed works, there are five historical *Mansavis* (poems), *Quran-us-Sa'dain*,

Miftah-ul-Futuh, *Ashiq*, *Tughlaq Namah* and *Nuh Sipihr*. We propose to examine the last one, the *Nuh Sipihr*, at some length.

Indian par excellence

Nuh Sipihr, the most interesting historical *masnavi* by Khusrau, was completed when the poet was almost sixty-seven years of age. The poem is divided into nine parts of unequal lengths each being named a 'sipihr' peculiar to one of the nine heavenly bodies, headed by introductory verse and concluded by a ghazal.

The Third Sipihr is perhaps the most valuable and the lively of the nine. It consists almost entirely of the praises of India and contains information about its climate, its flowers, its birds and other animals, its sciences, religions and languages. The poet has taken pains to prove that superiority to Khusrau and is very enthusiastic about the land of his birth. As a matter of fact the first dawn of home patriotism we find in Amir Khusrau. He was proud of India and being an Indian. 'Why', says he, 'some may ask me, all this preference for India? It is because India is the land of my birth and training.'

Khusrau first starts to give seven arguments to prove that India is Paradise, and shows its superiority to other countries in point of climate, flowers and fruits. He then shows the superiority of India in science and wisdom over all other nations. 'I know,' he says, 'that in this land lie concealed wisdom and ideas beyond compute'. Talking about Hindus, he says, 'Though they do not believe in our religion, many of their beliefs are like ours. They believe, for instance, in the unity and eternity of God. His power to create after nothingness, etc., and so are better than the Dualists or those who believe in Father and Son, the anthropomorphists, the Sabians the materialists or the Mushabbih. They worship, no doubt, stones, beasts, plants and the sun, but they recognize that these things are creations of God and adore them simply because their forefathers did so'. Islam is a semitic religion and flourished in Arabia after Judaism and Christianity. It permitted communication and concourse, including marriage, with *Ahl-i-kitab* (people of the book, i.e., Jews and Christians) to which the Islamic people all

over the globe cling even today in a shrunken world. But here is our poet-prophet who shows a better appreciation and sympathetic understanding of Indian life and religion and tries to take out the venom of hatred, if any, from the heart of Muslim masters who were ruling the country in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries.

Amir Khusrau gives ten reasons for India's superiority. He then makes some very interesting observations about the languages of India. Some curious accounts of Indian animals and their sagacity follow this. He then gives some instances of magic and sorcery as practised in India, and concludes: 'All this is sorcery and as such, unreal and eerie, but there is one thing of which you cannot deny the reality—the dying of Hindus out of devotion either with sword or with fire, a woman dying willingly for her dead (husband) and a man for an idol or a rich man.

The *masnavi* is certainly a great masterpiece. The "old Parrot of India" gives in it some of the sweetest melodies that ever flowed from his lyre. The thought that this was probably the last great poem he would live to write goaded the poet to do his best. He does actually pour out in it the pearls preserved in 'the bony casket replete with many a divine secret. The poem may safely be claimed to be a composition unique in style and spirit, in the whole range of masnavi literature.

Spiritual life

A mystic by nature in the years 671 A.H. (1274 A.D.) he became a disciple of the famous saint of Delhi, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, whom he had known from his early youth and for whom he had always had a great regard, and thus started his career as a full-fledged sufi. Nizamuddin Auliya, popularly known by the title of Sultan-ul-Auliya (the king of saints) was the disciple of Khwaja Farid of Ajodhan and the Khwaja had appointed Nizamuddin his successor before his death in preference to his own sons. Nizamuddin selected for his abode a spot some miles from the city of Delhi in a village called Ghiaspur. On the fifth of Muharram annually the 'urs of Khwaja Farid' was celebrated at his monastery and people came

from far and near to listen to the songs of the skilled Qawwals that enlivened the assembly. His disciples danced in rapture on hearing the ghazals of Khusrau, Hasan and Saidi that were recited to the accompaniment of drums or timberels. So Khusrau was a known figure, and it was with real affection and genuine pleasure that the saint received him when he called upon him to enrol himself in the growing throng of his disciples. 'A Turk has come to see 'us', he said to his servant, 'show him in'. 'Welcome and greetings', he said to Khusrau as the latter entered, and showed him great favour.

The saint soon conceived a strong liking for Khusrau. He gave him the title of Turkullah (Beloved of God) and is said to have remarked: 'I hope on the Day of Judgement to be expunged of all blame by the fire that burns in the heart of the Turk. Great attachment grew up between master and pupil and Khusrau was one of the most regular attendants at the monastery. Other disciples sought Khusrau's aid to obtain favours from the saint, and Khusrau was always ready to help them. He was still a courtier and so formed a link between the king, princes, and nobles on one side and his pious master in his retreat at Ghiaspur on the other, narrating to the Shaikh all the latest developments at the court, for although he never meddled in political affairs Nizamuddin could not but have a keen interest in them.

Although Amir Khusrau had achieved the highest perfection to his poetry long before he became a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya, his association with him gave it a new dimension, strength and vigour, imparted to it that fire and glow which are almost divine and which bring a poet very close to the level of a prophet. Henceforth his heart was set on things beyond sordid worldly intrigues and ambitions, and although he still continued to sing the praises of princes, all the serious thoughts dwelt in the realm of spiritual bliss and ecstasy.

Nothing can exceed the poet's enthusiasm and admiration for his 'pir'. All his works, since the time he became his disciple, are preceded by his praises. The saint, too, on his side had the highest regard for the great poet who in spite of his constant association with nobles and princes was at heart a pure and virtuous *darvesh*. Amir Khusrau's ready humour, his lively nature and his versatile genius made him a pleasant companion. 'I get

tired of every one', the saint once said to Khusrau, 'but I never get tired of you.' He once composed the following quatrain in admiration of his pupil.

'Khusrau, like whom few men have written poetry or prose, is certainly the king of poetry's ream. He is our Khusrau, not Nasir Khusrau, and God himself is the helper of our Khusrau.

The Shaikh's kindness and affection were a source of great strength for the poet in his old age, and helped him to bear with patience the sorrows and bereavements that often beset "the declining years of man, and of which Khusrau had his full share. But how long? Nizammuddin Auliya was already ninety-five years old. So on eighteenth of Rabi II 725 A.H. (1325 A.D.), at sunset the saint gave up the ghost and actually the sun set on the spiritual world.

Amir Khusrau was away in Avadh with the royal army while his master, Shaikh, lay ill in Delhi. He heard of his death only on his arrival in the capital. The sad news of the final and irrevocable separation after years of friendship and love broke the heart of the aged poet. He rent his garments, blackened his face and he took himself to the grave of the Shaikh. According to a pathetic old legend, he recited the following beautiful 'doha' at the grave and fell down in a swoon:

Gori sowe sej par, mukh

par dare kes,

Chal Khusro ghar apne,

rain bheai chou des.

"The fair one lies on the couch with her black tresses squattered on her face; O Khusrau, come home, now, for night has enwrapped the four corners of the world."

'My end is now not far off, Amir Khusrau is said to have declared, 'for the Shaikh had told me that I would not survive him long.' And so it was; he died only a few months after, on Friday night, the 29th of Ziq'a'd 725 A.H. (1325 A.D.) and was buried at the foot of the grave of his spiritual guide and preceptor. It is said Nizamuddin Auliya had desired that he should be buried by his side. 'He is the keeper of my secrets, and I shall not set food in Paradise without him. If it were lawful, I should have instructed you to bury him in the same grave with me so that we two may always remain together. On Amir Khusrau's death, then, his friends wanted to bury him

beside his master under the cupola on the latter's grave, but an attendant of the tomb objected, saying that the two graves would be confused by people and so the poet was laid to rest outside the cupola. There he lies to this day and his grave has become a place of pilgrimage. As a rule, the pilgrims first visit the grave of Amir Khusrau and then the tomb of the Shaikh. Whether they will rise together and enter Paradise hand in hand on the Day of Judgement, nobody can foresee, but certainly they have passed into immortality together and their names shall ever be linked together in the memory of succeeding generations.

Khusrau—the man

There have been in the history of the world but few instances of a scholar or a poet acquiring a prominence and popularity like those of Amir Khusrau. Centuries have elapsed since he sang his last song and the voice that had charmed princes and peasants alike was hushed for ever, yet the memory of his name is as fresh today as ever.

Amir Khusrau was not a dry ascetic. He laughed and sang, listened to beautiful dancing girls, and was present at the wine-parties of princes. He was much at home in a motley crowd of buffoons and clowns as in a learned gathering of savants. He saw the misery in life and was sometimes sad, but he carried his sorrows lightly. He saw what was ridiculous and droll, and he laughed at it. He laughed at pedantic scholars, at intolerant bigots, at hypocritical sufis, at miserly princes, and at ambitious plagiarists. Yet his laughter had in it nothing of malice, it was as light as his spirits, good-humoured and amusing.

A great tolerance, rare in his age, is the other prominent feature of Khusrau's character. He had few racial, religious, or social prejudices. He was sought after by everyone. His presence in an assembly lighted, so to say, another candle. He never stooped to meanness, and never degraded his art by a wholesale production of panegyrics. Khusrau never preached duplicity and hypocrisy.

Khusrau is a legend. One may still hear an old man relate an anecdote about the poet to eager young ears, *darveshes* dancing in mad rapture to the words of one of his ghazals, and women singing in melodious chorus some of his Hindi songs.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the Aligarh Movement

DR. A.M. KHUSRO

The arrival of Syed Ahmad Khan on the Indian educational scene is perhaps the most outstanding event in the 19th century in the history of Muslim education. After 1857 the Indians generally and Muslims specially, having been totally defeated by the foreign power, were sulking. The Muslim community was not inclined to take an active share in the mainstream of national life and had almost totally withdrawn from the scene. Muslim youth concerned itself only with traditional and religious learning through the medium of the Arabic and the Persian language. They abhorred European styles and the English language with the result that post-Renaissance European thought, which was in its heyday, and post-industrial revolution technology were bypassing them. They were not interested, not even aware of the sea-change. Their own system of life had lost its earlier dynamism and robustness. The doors of 'ijtehad' or re-interpretation of Muslim Law had been closed for fear that a re-interpretation in a society dominated by aliens will lead to a total pollution of thinking and action, and the norms of Islamic 'Shariah' will be diluted and discarded. Meanwhile, some other categories of Indian society had begun to adopt Western learning through the English language. This was beginning to give them employment but, more importantly, was making them feel at ease with Western thought-patterns and concepts such as democracy, liberty, rule of law, laissez-faire, industrialization and scientific temper.

The Muslim elite had fallen decades behind. Sir Syed saw total defeat in these backward-looking postures and put all his boundless energy behind the idea of pulling them out of their intellectual isolation from world currents and their touch-me-not aloofness in matters of bread and butter. At Aligarh in 1875, Sir Syed started a school which, two year later, in 1877, became the Mohammadan Anglo Oriental (M.A.O) College and later, in 1920, became the Muslim University. It is well-known that Sir Syed's excursion into the realm of modern education through the English language led to serious hostilities and criticisms by the dominant public opinion among the Muslims. Religious dispensations or 'fatwas' were obtained in order to declare him a nonbeliever but Sir Syed jeered at the verdicts and continued steadfastly on his chosen but difficult path.

In advance of his times

When he arrived on the scene, Sir Syed's ideas were in advance of his times, but he made the times advance rapidly to catch on with his ideas. While his MAO College was primarily meant for the educational uplift of the Muslims, Sir Syed, with the liberality of mind that was characteristic of him, opened the doors of the College from the very beginning to all communities. His broadmindedness led him to mingle the Hindus and the Muslims, the class and the mass. He insisted on equality of rights between all communities in his College and elsewhere and refused to create two citizenships.

Sir Syed believed that the basis of a common nationality was not religion but homeland. In his lectures and writings he has stated clearly that he regarded the Hindus and the Muslims like two eyes of the same person and that discrimination between them was not possible.

In one of his lectures Sir Syed stated:

The main reason behind the establishment of this institution as I am sure all of you know, was the wretched dependence of the Muslims, which had been debasing their position day after day. Their religious fanaticism did not let them avail the educational facilities provided by the government schools and colleges. It was, therefore, deemed necessary to make

some special arrangement for their education. Suppose, for example, there are two brothers, one of them is quite hale and hearty but the other is diseased. His health is on the decline. Thus it is the duty of all brothers to take care of their ailing brother and bear the hands in his trouble. This was the very idea which goaded me to establish the Muhammedan Anglo Oriental College. But I am pleased to say that both the brothers get the same education in this college. All rights of the college appertaining to those who call themselves Muslims are equally related to those who call themselves Hindus without any reservations. There is no distinction whatsoever between Hindus and Muslims. Only one who strives hard can lay claim to get the award. Here in this College Hindus as well as Muslims are entitled to get the stipends and both of them are treated at par as boarders. I regard both Hindus and Muslims as my two eyes.

In the interest of an effective educational programme, Sir Syed pleaded for keeping out of agitational politics. This has sometimes been interpreted as aloofness from the struggle for freedom. But as S.K. Bhatnager has remarked, a realist as Sir Syed was, he felt that with hostile or suspicious British Government his educational efforts were bound to end in smoke.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru correctly saw the spirit of Sir Syed's mission when he stated in his Autobiography:

So, to this education he turned all his energy trying to win over his community to his way of thinking. He wanted no diversions or distractions from other directions; it was a difficult enough piece of work to overcome the inertia and hesitation of the Muslims. The Hindus, half a century ahead in Western education, could indulge in this pastime. Sir Syed's decision to concentrate on western education for Muslims was undoubtedly a right one. Without that they could not have played any effective part in the building up of Indian nationalism of the new type, and they would have been doomed to play second fiddle to the Hindus with their better education and far stronger economic position. The Muslims were not

historically or ideologically ready then for the bourgeois nationalist movement as they had developed no bourgeoisie, as the Hindus had done. Sir Syed's activities, therefore, although seemingly very moderate, were in the right revolutionary direction".

There was no question of Sir Syed acquiescing with the foreign regime. He said in one of his lectures: "if the Government has not conceded some of our rights to us as yet, for which we may have grudge, higher education is such a thing that it will secure those rights for us, may be, willy nilly or against its wishes".

English medium

Although Sir Syed did not speak the English language well he made it the medium of instruction at Aligarh. He is sometimes lightly criticised for legitimising a foreign language and foreign styles. But this was merely the outer facade. Sir Syed was really seeking to legitimise the basic tenets of the post-Renaissance scientific attitude. He had clearly discerned the need to shift from rigid and dogmatic beliefs to empirical and rational beliefs—from blind faith to reasoning. Sir Syed was the first Indian to establish and promote the Scientific Society which is active even today at Aligarh. Through this society he propagated methods of reasoning, dialogue, experimentation and testing of hypotheses. In essence, Sir Syed taught as western empiricism does, that in worldly matters beliefs and views should be held for tentatively and not for dogmatically; they should be held for the time being in the belief that further experiment, further evidence, further thinking will force a change in the old beliefs and positions in favour of new beliefs and postures. In so far as he promoted a scientific attitude, Sir Syed was perhaps the most forward-looking of Indians in the 19th century.

The establishment of the M.A.O College was described by Lord Lytton as "an epoch in the social progress of India". Several decades later Sir Hemilton Gibb characterised the College as "the first modernist institution in Islam". The College had the advantage of being founded and for nearly a quarter century administered by a personality whose head and heart

were in the right place. The dynamism of the Aligarh movement, the values cherished over a hundred years in the MAO College and the AMU, and the residential life at Aligarh which polished and chiselled the students became a catalytic agent in the production of highly seasoned and polished personalities in numerous walks of life.

Sir Syed created an institution which first as M.A.O. College and then since 1920 as Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), became the generator of an amazing range of talent. "I came, I saw and I was conquered" is the most likely feeling of almost every person who has had occasion to visit the AMU. Aligarh's "culture of decency" has a compelling appeal. You can have a negative view of Aligarh when you have not been there, but you cannot when you have known it.

Freedom fighters

What should one think of a university which has produced freedom fighters like Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Hasrat Mohani, Raja Mahinder Pratap, Syed Husain, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Mohammad Yunus, and claims to have how on its rolls a Zakir Husain who rose to be a President of India, an Ayub Khan who became President of Pakistan, a Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, a Prime Minister of Pakistan, an Ahmad Said Khan of Chhatari, a Prime Minister of Hyderabad, Shaikh Abdullah, G. M. Sadiq and Mir Qasim, all Chief Ministers of Jammu and Kashmir and Abdul Gafoor, Chief Minister of Bihar? Aligarh seems to have been a perennial source of talent and can boast of having had among its students and staff personalities of the stature of Abdul Haq, Abdul Majid Daryabadi, D.D. Kosambi, K.M. Panikkar and Haroon Khan Sherwani among its scholars and Baber Mirza, Zakir Husain, Ghulam Sayyedein, Mohammad Habib, Hadi Husan, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah and Mumtaz Jehan Hyder among its educators. Aligarh has produced Fani Josh, Majaz, Jazbi and Ali Sardar Jafri among its poets and Sajjad Hyder Yaldram, Zafer Ali Khan, Sedat Hasan Minto, Ismat Chughtai, Qazi Abdul Gaffar, Rasheed Ahmad Siddiqi, Aley Ahmad Suroor and Raja Rao among its men of letters. As for sports, Ghouse Mohammad learnt his tennis at Aligarh and Wazir Ali, Nazir Ali, Lala

Amarnath, C.S. Naidu and Mushtaq Ali their cricket. Among Olympic hockey players, Mohammed Jafar, Masood Minhas, Ali Sayeed, Inamur Rehman and Govinda, played for India, Abdul Qayyum and Anwar Ahmad Khan for Pakistan and Doraswamy for Malaysia. Even among film personalities Aligarh is not to be left behind. It has given to the country Begum Para, Neena, Renuka Devi, Talat Mahmood, Shakeel Badayuni, Rahi Masoom Raza, Javed (of Saleem Javed fame), Rahman and Tabassum.

Nor have the springs of talent dried up in the present times: Aligarh still has an Irfan Habib (historian), a Mohammed Shafi (geographer), a Mehdi Hasan (anatomist) and a Khursheedul Islam, a Khalilur Rahman Azmi and a Qazi Abdul Sattar (all men of letters). The 'mehfils' of Aligarh still reverberate with the poems of Waheed Akhtar, Sajida Zaidi, Zahida Zaidi, Ravindra Bhramar and Shiv Shanker Sharma Rakesh. A Govinda still represents Aligarh in Indian and world hockey and an Afsar Husain still is the national yachting champion. Aligarh men and women, teachers and students continue to make the grade at the highest rungs of the national ladder—Minister of Education, Nurul Hasan, Minister of State for Railways, Shafi Qureshi, Minister of State for Industry B.P. Maurya, Minister of State for Law, V.A. Saiyed Mohammad, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Satish Chandra, Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission, A.R. Kidwai, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia, Masood Husain Khan, Director of the National Council of Educational Research and Training, Rais Ahmed, Rector of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Moonis Raza, Indian Ambassador in Syria, K. A. Nizami, secretary in the Central Government, Mahmood Butt, Chairman of the Subordinate Service Commission, Syed Hamid and Chairman of the Technical Terminology Commission, H. L. Sharma, are all Aligarh teachers or students. Until earlier this month it could be said that if the President of India is not an Aligarh product, the First Lady, Begum Abida Ahmed is.

With all the ups and downs over the last hundred years Aligarh has flourished and has continued to cherish the basic values. An integrated life has survived and the educational-cum-residential system has acquired a flavour of its own. Over the years a number of Departments have grown at Aligarh

which while catering to the study of the three major streams of Indian culture—the Indo-Aryan stream, the Islamic stream and the European stream—specialise in particular in the middle stream—the Islamic stream. This cultural trait at Aligarh is likely to acquire even greater resilience and dynamism in the foreseeable future.

The Relevance of Iqbal

PROF ALI AHMED SUROOR

Iqbal, the great Urdu and Persian poet, and Philosopher, along with Tagore occupies a pre-eminent place in our world of letters. There is some controversy about his year of birth, but the consensus is now in favour of accepting the date given by the poet while presenting his Ph D. thesis.

There are many in this country, for whom Iqbal is "the founder of Pakistan" and, therefore, unworthy of further attention. There are others like S. Sinha for whom Iqbal's relevance for us is confined to his first phase only, when he sang fervently that every grain of the soil of the homeland was a god to him. In his book *The Message of Iqbal* Sinha has chastised Iqbal for addressing himself mostly to Muslims and criticising Nationalism. In the thirties, there were some Marxists who were critical of him because he praised the eagle and once wrote admiringly of Mussolini. And in secular India, there are those who either dislike his politics or his passion for religion or his strong attacks on modernity and the West. But the fact remains that these critics fail to appreciate Iqbal in his totality. It is not necessary to justify everything that Iqbal said or did, but it is only fair that anyone who writes about him, has read, first his Urdu and Persian poetry, preferably in the original, and then, his book *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Iqbal was a great poet and a thinker who was at home in both Eastern and Western philosophy. It was late in life that he turned to politics, and it is worthwhile to quote here what Jawaharlal Nehru has written about Iqbal and Pakistan.

"Iqbal was one of the early advocates of Pakistan and yet he appears to have realized its inherent danger and absurdity.

Edward Thompson has written that, in the course of conversation, Iqbal told him that he had advocated Pakistan because of his position as president of the Muslim League session, but he felt sure that it would be injurious to India as a whole and to Muslims specially. Probably he had changed his mind, or he had not given much thought to the question previously, as it had assumed no importance then. His whole outlook on life does not fit in with the subsequent developments of the idea of Pakistan or division of India" (pp 354-355).

Proper perspective

I would therefore like to emphasize that Iqbal has to be viewed today, in proper perspective, primarily as a poet and a philosopher and though we cannot impose his later political postures they cannot be called central in his whole output. The fact that his poetry is mostly addressed to Muslims, does not detract his greatness as a poet. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru answered this criticism, soon after Iqbal's death, in an article in the Iqbal Number of *Urdu Aurangabad*. He says: "In my opinion those who consider Iqbal merely an Islamic poet, are very unfair to him. To say this is to limit the sphere of his influence. It is true that he has written a lot about Islamic philosophy, Islamic greatness and Islamic culture. But no one till today has minimised the influence of Milton by saying that he was a poet of Christianity, or of Kalidasa by calling him a poet of Hinduism, nor did people of other religions appreciate these poets less because of this fact. If Iqbal talks about the notable achievements of Islamic history, or refers to the greatness of Islam, there is no reason why non-Muslims should not appreciate him." (My translation)

Core of faith

Poets have a central core of faith. This faith may derive its strength from Mythology, Religion, Philosophy or Science or any other source. Poetry is not an imitation of life, it is a reorganization, a recreation of life. Any world-view projected in poetry is valid, if it is based on felt-thought. It does not have to conform to a particular scientific, philosophical, moral, or social

code. A. F. R. Leavis has put it, "its universality has in its particularity", in its unusually sharp and deeply felt recreation of life through a specially charged language, which does not inform but reveals old truths made new and significant.

Iqbal is a product of the movement for social and religious reform started by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and should be viewed in the larger perspective of the Indian Renaissance which began in Bengal, as a result of the impact of the West. In its first stage, it imbibed the national spirit of the West and its liberal ideas but was frankly imitative. Later, when the new generation received English education, it proceeded to discover its soul, and a new urge for the democratic ideals of the West, its concept of the freedom of the individual, its dynamism and its nationalism. Iqbal who had received his early education in the traditional way, with a good grounding in Arabic and Persian, was exposed in his school and college to English literature and particularly Western philosophy. His teacher at Lahore was Prof. Arnold, who had earlier been with Sir Syed at Aligarh, when he began writing poetry, he wrote, lovingly about the Himalayas, the 'new temple' the "national song of Indian children," "the Picture of Pain" which highlighted his love for his country, his distress at the differences between the various communities, along with a passion for nature and beauty in any form. In this first phase Iqbal is following the path of poetry with a purpose, which Hali laid down, but his language with its rich metaphor and picturesque imagery is modelled on Ghalib. When Sheikh Abdul Qadir brought out his journal *Makhzan* in 1901, Iqbal's poems began to appear in it regularly.

Western influences

He left for Europe in 1905, and returned to India in 1908, after his study at Cambridge and later in Germany. In Europe, he was able to see for himself what European culture in spite of its scientific outlook and liberal ideas, was heading for, how capitalism had led to Imperialism, and how narrow nationalism was dividing mankind into nation states constantly at war with each other. As Bertrand Russell has observed in his *History of Western Philosophy* there were two revolts against the Mechanistic nineteenth century science, which could be noticed early

in the twentieth century, one was intellectual, led by Marx and the other was emotional, led by Nietzsche and Bergson. Iqbal came under the influence of the latter, who can be called late romantics and post romantics. It would not be correct to say that Iqbal is a follower of Nietzsche or Bergson, or Fichte or even Goethe. But he was certainly influenced by them and the ideas that were germinating in his mind were capitalized after this impact. Marxism is a later influence which becomes apparent after the First World War and the October Revolution. But though Iqbal welcomes the age of the worker and is bitterly opposed to capitalism, he is unable to stomach the materialistic and atheistic basis of Marxism.

In Urdu and Persian

Iqbal did not write much poetry while in Europe, but after his return to India in 1908, he wrote in Urdu, *Shikwa* (complaint) *Jawab-e-Shikwa* (Answer to the complaint) and *Shama-o-Shair* (The candle and the poet). Which show themes and ideas which found a fuller and more convincing expression in his Persian poem *Israr-e-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self), followed by *Rumooz-e-Bekhudi* (Secrets of Selflessness). Dr. A.R. Nicholson translated the former into English. Iqbal is occupied in these two poems with moral philosophy. He accepted evolution. He recognised with most moderns the value of varied individual personalities. Life could not be reduced to a closed system. There was an inherent purpose in the Cosmos. Muslim decadence in India violated enduring cosmic requirements. Uniqueness of individuality had value. The whole cosmos exhibited the uniqueness of the Absolutely Unique Individual (God) and the destiny of each man was to be more like God, more uniquely individual and therefore, more creative. Time was merely a tool, an expression of the individual which transcended it.' History and historical progress must be the centre of moral attention and even provide the test of moral validity. With his belief in historical change, evolution and subordination of race and colour to a universal brotherhood based on belief in God, Iqbal naturally turned to Islam, which according to him embodied the principles of continuity and development. He is for the development of the self to its full stature, but wants this self

to be responsible to social needs. He praised all things which strengthened the Self, movement, action, conflict, loftiness of thought and deed, concern with life and full participation in its activities and was against all things that weakened self, withdrawal from life, monastic behaviour, passivity, inertia. Though he praised the early Sufis for their austerity, their love for mankind, their inner vision, which refused to be narrow and dogmatic, he criticized the later Sufis, who preached renunciation, negation of self, and contemplation of the world from an Olympian height. Iqbal is against Mysticism as an ideology hence his opposition to the philosophy of Ibn-e-Arabi called *Wahdat-ul Wujood* (unity of existence), which seems to render struggle and action useless, hence also his criticism of the great poet Hafiz. For Iqbal the future is open with new possibilities and man comes of age without God suffering death as in the case of Nietzsche.

Philosophical poems

Israr-e-Khudi and *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi*, are philosophical poems of a high order and the vision of life and its possibilities; first presented here in a coherent way, finds constant expression almost like a refrain in both Urdu and Persian poetry, later the elegy to his mother, rises above a personal loss, as death, according to Iqbal, is not the end, but a new beginning and this existence is replaced by a new life and new worlds. So there is no limit to the powers of man, and mankind can go on renewing itself.

The First World War saw one kind of world crumbling and a new one struggling to be born. The Russian Revolution deeply moved Iqbal and in his *Khizre-Rah* (Guide of the path) written in 1921, Iqbal through Khizr, the prophet who guides those who have lost their way, talks in this poem about life, Imperialism and the conflict between capital and labour. He regards life as above the measure of loss or gain, as life is at times in living and at others in death. He regards the rule of dominant nations as a spell cast on the vanquished, which distorts their sense of right and wrong. He speaks feelingly of the lot of the poor under the rule of the rich and the powerful, and urges the worker to rise, as his age in the East and West is about to dawn. This poem is one of the finest in Urdu and a

rich poetic language is made to sustain the most complex, social and political themes. There is another poem in Urdu called *Tuloo-e-Islam* (The rise of Islam) which also depicts Iqbal's reactions to the First World War and the fate of the Islamic world and greets the victory of Mustafa Kamal, later called Atatürk.

Reply to Goethe

Before the collection of Urdu poems called *Bang-e-Dora* could come out, Iqbal's *Payam-e-Mashriq* (Message of the East) came out in Persian, as a reply to Goethe. I regard *Israr-e-Khudi*, *Payam-e-Mashriq* and *Javed Namah* as his most representative and outstanding works in Persian. In Urdu, along with some of the poems mentioned above, *Bal-e-Jibriel* (The wing of Gabriel) and parts of *Zarb-e-Kalim* contain his best effort. *Payam-e-Mashriq* has the distinction of containing some of the finest poems of Iqbal of which the trilogy dealing with Adam, creation and Satan, the poem on Solitude and the dialogue between God and Man, along with some of his ghazals, reveal great imaginative power, the glory of individuality and creativity and search for perfection of life-giving and inspiring out over passive Nature. *Javed Namah* is obviously modelled in Divine Comedy. It depicts the poet's journey through the leaders accompanied by Vishwamitra, the great Indian saint and his dialogues with some great figures in the history of Religion, Philosophy, Politics and letters. The range of thought and sweep of imagination here is simply magnificent. Iqbal's anguish over the spirit of India in chains, his tribute to Tipu Sultan, his dialogue with Ghalib and Jamaluddin Afghani and Bhartari Hari the great Indian poet, finally establish Iqbal's debt to Indian saints and Advaita philosophy, as well as his obligation to Rumi and some Western philosophers.

The next great work of Iqbal is in Urdu and it is entitled *Bal-e-Jibriel*. Here we find some of the most outstanding poems in Urdu. His tribute to Lenin surpasses anything written by the progressive writers. His *Masjid-e-Qartaha* (Mosque of Cardorn) is a great poem by any world standard. The great mosque evolves memories of Time, History, Art and Revolution. The mosque is sublime and beautiful because it is a symbol of faith and of men of faith who have perfected their self and stam-

ped their personality on their age and on all ages. And the vision of the mosque leads the poet to dream of the future with its untold and hidden possibilities. Another poem is about evolution which is endless, and another is a dialogue between Jibriel and Iblis. Iqbal's *Iblis* (Salam) shows unmistakable influence of Goethe. It is interesting to note the fact here that Iqbal's *Iblis* towers over Jibriel (Gabriel) because Iblis Jibreil is a thorn in the flesh of God, while Jibreil offers only hymns of promise to him. Living and not prayer is Iqbal's love.

Another collection of Urdu poems which was published in 1936, is *Zaab-e-Kalim* (the blow of Moses). It is noteworthy for its epigrammatic and petty observations about Iqbal's favourite subjects and many contemporary problems. It has a beautiful poem (Ray of hope) on India and her freedom.

Iqbal's Urdu and Persian poetry has no doubt attracted notice in East and West, but it must be said here that his magnum opus is the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*. As, Iqbal Singh has pointed out 'Iqbal was agonizingly aware of the present'. Sheikh Muhammad Ikram goes a step further and says that 'it was the West which made Iqbal what he became'. In this book Iqbal has acknowledged the fact that "religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary for the last five hundred years". Iqbal welcomes the liberal movement in modern Islam, but sees its dangers also. The impact of the West on Islam and Muslim is not merely natural according to Iqbal, he appreciates it also. Quite early in the book he says:

The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture in its intellectual side is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam. Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement, and we may fail to reach the time inwardness of that culture." So it is unfair to say that Iqbal turns his back to modernity and wants to go back to a golden age. Iqbal is here in the company of Einstein who would like to combine Science and spirituality. In his Preface,

he had asserted that "the day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsurpassed mutual harmonies." The trend in this direction is unmistakable.

Iqbal believed in both continuity and development. He thought Hinduism only emphasised continuity and Christianity and the West only change and Islam could balance both. Continuity could provide long-term standards but as development was also absolutely essential, the door of Ijtihad to form an independent judgement on a legal question must always remain open. The concern with Ijtihad is also manifest in his letters to many learned men and friends, where he makes enquiries about books and comments elsewhere. These letters also show that Iqbal wanted Art to be purposive and life giving and was against decadent art.

Being pre-eminently a poet and philosopher, Iqbal's views about the mission of man and his destiny are still fairly valid and his concern for development and finding new solutions to new problems, relevant. But as Marshall G.S. Hodgson has observed in his book *The Venture of Islam* Iqbal's "view of the evolution of Modern Europe was shallow and one-sided". Iqbal's view that "the West will destroy itself", is now shared by many Western writers and thinkers, but is doubtful that Islam will take its place. As Hodgson has pertinently remarked "the West will not perish alone". But looking for a life-partner in the East, of the future which is different from the West is right upto a point, after which all parts of the world have to face common problem and find common solution.

True secularism

Secular India is not irreligious India. Whatever Secularism may have come to mean in the West, in India it cannot mean absence of religions. In a multi-religious society like ours, it can only succeed if we do not favour any religion, nor object to back of religion. When Iqbal pleaded late in life for a separate homeland for Muslims in India, he failed to realize that this went against his own poetry and philosophy. He did not want Muslims to limit their social or political outlook within any one territory, and inspite of this, he did plead in his Allahabad

address for a Muslim India within or without India. Actually, as Maulana Azad observed in his Ramgarh address, there is no contradiction in being all for Islam and all for India, in being good Muslims and good Indians, in owning the whole heritage of Islam and the whole heritage of India. The important thing is not to claim a separate identity, but to insist on a special identity in the context of the broader Indian identity. Just as separatism is suicidal, similarly ultra-secularism or opportunist attempts to lose all sense of Islam and its glorious heritage is equally suicidal. Hodgeson has some pertinent remarks to make in this context:

“If the realities of the Islamic heritage can be frankly faced—its historical actuality good and bad, the problems which it presents as well as the spiritual opportunities it offers—then Islam as a heritage might conceivably prove able to serve flexibly in the modern crises. Facing up to their history in this way might help Muslims and possibly others as well to overcome the cultural dislocations of our time and provide a basis for creativity in the midst of lettered mass culture a basis consistent with but able to transcend the ‘democratic virtues’. Thus generally, it might show that Islam was able to full the modern need for moral vision, for a creative illumination of the human conscience in a technicalistic world” (*The Venture of Islam* Vol. 3 pp 440).

Dr. Abid Husain, in his book on the *‘Indian Muslims in the Mirror of the Ages’* has rightly observed that “many Muslims regarded Iqbal’s poetry as philosophy and ignored his philosophy altogether.” For poetry, however philosophical, can never be a substitute for philosophy. And it has no need to be. The language of poetry is a special kind of language. Its symbolism, its metaphors, its imagery, have a meaning which is not literal. When Iqbal says that ‘He has to develop his self to the pitch that before ordaining his fate, God would ask man to express his wishes’ it is a way of saying that man can be master of his destiny if he perfects himself. Similarly his characters like Iblis, and his symbols like the eagle, are literary devices to indicate a frequent possibility. Iqbal’s poetry derives its strength

and greatness from his faith in the greatness of man and his unlimited possibilities. It draws from all that is significant in Indian, Islamic and Western thought. Secular India, in facing the challenges of today, has to be conscious and proud of its whole heritage in which Islam in India has played a notable part—and in this task as well as in facing the future with confidence in herself, both Iqbal and Tagore can be of great help.

His greatness

Having said all this, I must add that Iqbal's greatness as a poet does not rest on his message or on the philosophy underlying it. Greatness in poetry is not dependent on a coherent philosophy or religious system. One does not have to subscribe to the mythology of W.B. Yeats, or the Roman Catholics of T.S. Eliot, to appreciate their poetry. Great poetry comes out of a great vision, systematic or not, and it is expressed in language in which "the word" becomes "a world"; in Iqbal, the word is not only a world but a glorious world. It is not content to hold a mirror to life like statesmen and Ghalib. It wants to shape it nearer to its hearts desire. Poets have been at both these tasks throughout their ages and we judge their merit not according to this or that philosophy, but because of the range of their vision, the depth of their special insight and their ability to create through their words a world, significant for us. And Iqbal in this respect is no doubt in the galaxy of the Immortals.

Once a prize distribution function was going on in a Delhi school. As the names were announced the prize-winners went up the dais and received the prizes amidst cheers and clappings from the Principal of the school, who was a gentle, quiet and dignified man. He was sharing the happiness of his students. Just then a member of his family came and whispered something into his ear. The Principal looked perturbed for a moment but soon he resumed his pleasant manner and was his usual, smiling self. But after a few more minutes the messenger rushed in again and whispered something to the Principal. For a moment the Principal's face turned white but he quickly recovered and went on with the task of giving away the prizes.

After the prize distribution he spoke in his usual cheerful and affectionate manner—congratulating the prize winners and asking the others to emulate them.

Only when the function was over he left for his house. His favourite five-year old daughter, Rehana had died. The first message was that she had met with an accident. She was running in the verandah and had fallen and had become unconscious. The second message was that she had died. Asked why he did not leave immediately, he replied, "Did you not see happiness writ large on every face? How could I deprive those children of their happiness?"

Do you know who this Principal was? He was the late Dr. Zakir Husain.

Zakir Husain was born in a family of Afridi Afghans, well-known for their martial traditions. In the 18th century, some seven generations ago, the ancestors of the family had come

and settled at Quaimganj—a small town in the Farrukhabad District of Uttar Pradesh. Zakir Husain's father Fida Husain bade good bye to the ancestral military career and took to law. He moved to Hyderabad, now capital of Andhra Pradesh and soon became a leading lawyer there. It was here in Hyderabad that Zakir Husain was born on 8th February, 1897.

Zakir Husain got his preliminary education at Hyderabad from an English tutor. He was only nine when his father died. So the family had to move to the ancestral house in Quaimganj. In 1908 Zakir Husain was sent to a residential school in Etawah, situated at a short distance from Quaimganj.

He was only 14 when his mother also died. He felt a great shock because he had loved his mother dearly and was greatly influenced by her personality during the early years of his life.

After the death of his mother, Zakir Husain came under the influence of Husan Shah, who was a great Sufi saint. Zakir Husain imbibed from him the qualities of humanity and respect for other religions.

While he was in the school at Etawah politics began to move Zakir Husain. So great was his interest in politics and current affairs that he daily walked the distance from the school to Etawah railway station in order to collect his copy of *Pioneer*. Then he would run back to the school to discuss the news of the day with his friends.

After passing the Matriculation Examination in 1913, Zakir Husain joined the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh. By his extraordinary intelligence and sharp wit he soon established his superiority over his school fellows. He had in fact already become a *murshid* (monitor) to his admirers. He was also a formidable debater and got several awards for being the best speaker during his college days. He was also elected Vice President of the College Students Union.

During his college days, he made friends with two equally talented students—Rasheed Ahmed Siddiqui and Maulana Iqbal Ahmed Khan Suhil. These friendships proved to be life-long friendships.

After passing B.A., Zakir Husain joined M. A. (Economics) and law classes. During his university days he was influenced by the writings of Maulana Mohammed Ali and Maulana Abul

Kalam Azad. In fact, it was the writings of the latter that gave shape to his religious thinking.

On 12 October, 1920, Gandhiji visited M.A.O. College and advised the students to boycott educational institutions controlled by the British Government and stressed the need for developing centres of national education instead. Among those who responded to his call was Zakir Husain, then 23.

The decision to leave M.A.O. College was made easier by the Principal of the College, Dr. Ziaddin. He tried to dissuade Zakir Husain from leaving the College. He also offered to get him the post of Deputy Collector, within a year of his passing the M.A. Examination from that College. Zakir Husain's noble mind revolted against this inducement and he decided to leave M.A.O. College immediately.

And on 29 October, he along with a few others founded a rival institution which came to be known as Jamia Millia Islamia.

This was a turning point in his life. And it surprised many of his friends and relatives. But Zakir Husain decided to dedicate his life to the cause of Education. After teaching in the Jamia Millia for two years he thought of improving his own educational qualifications.

But as a non-co-operator he could not join any of the British Universities in India nor could he go to England. But he could secure a passport endorsed for Great Britain only. Zakir Husain did not go to England. When the ship reached Italy, he disembarked and from there, went to Austria and then on to Germany. After a preliminary course in German, he joined the University of Berlin for a doctorate in Economics and ultimately got his Ph.D. in 1926.

In Germany Zakir Husain came in contact with Mohammed Mujeeb and Abid Husain, both of whom later served the Jamia as his colleagues and dedicated their lives to that institution.

Even in Germany Gandhiji was always before his mind's eye and he used to contribute articles in German on the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He was the greatest exponent of Mahatma Gandhi's ideals in Germany. An introduction to Mahatma Gandhi which he wrote in German was very well received.

While in Germany Zakir Husain learnt that the Organizers of the Jamia Millia were thinking of closing down the institution for lack of funds he sent a cable, "I and some of my colleagues in Europe have decided to donate our lives to the cause of the Jamia. It should not be closed until we come to India." The closure was stayed and the institution was moved from Aligarh to Delhi in 1925 at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi who promised to raise funds.

Zakir Husain returned to India in 1926 and was made the Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia. He was 29 at that time. It was indeed a great honour. But it also meant a hard life, a life of poverty and privation. Since the financial position of Jamia Millia was not very sound, Zakir Husain and his colleagues, Mohammed Mujeeb and Abid Husain decided to reduce their salaries from Rs. 300/- to Rs. 200/- and then to Rs. 150/- p.m. and thereafter to even less. Zakir Husain was drawing less than Rs. 100/- p.m. (Rs. 95/- to be precise) when he left the Jamia in 1948. He spent his time in collecting funds for the institution. He served the Jamia Millia for 22 years on a meagre salary while he was getting other offers for jobs carrying fat salaries. But how could he leave the Jamia which he had nourished like a child?

For several years Jamia Millia had to struggle with the problem of funds. But for the untiring efforts of Zakir Husain to collect funds and the willing sacrifice of the Jamia fraternity, again inspired by Zakir Husain, this national institution could not have survived.

Vice-Chancellor Zakir Husain was quite different from other Vice-Chancellors. He treated the children of Jamia Millia like his own children. He loved cleanliness and wanted his students to remain neat and clean. Once he found a young High School boy with a dirty cap on. He took him home, washed his cap, dried it, pressed it and placed it on his head. From that day onward that boy never wore dirty clothes.

On another occasion he asked his students to polish their shoes. But he found that several students did not pay any heed to it. So the next day he sat at the entrance of the Jamia Millia, saw everybody's shoes and polished with his own hands the shoes which were unpolished. The shame-faced youngsters whose shoes he polished learnt a lesson of cleanliness for their lives.

Zakir Husain did not think that any work was below his dignity. When a High School teacher refused to take a primary class he himself went to take that class. Rather he liked to teach the primary classes as he felt it was easier to mould the minds of children during the early years.

Jamia Millia under Dr. Zakir Husain's paternal care was getting great attention from the people and educationists from all over the country. Even Mahatma Gandhi sent his son Devdas to teach and learn at Jamia Millia.

In 1937 India got a measure of provincial autonomy and popular governments were established in various provinces. Gandhiji placed his scheme of Basic Education before the country. The aim of this scheme was to make education self-sufficient and also to impart some training of handicrafts so that after finishing their education they should be able to earn their bread and should not run after white-collar jobs. Mahatma Gandhi rightly picked up Zakir Husain to preside over the National Committee on Basic Education which was to draft the new scheme for its adoption by the popular governments. Dr. Zakir Husain had also come in contact with what is popularly known as "New Education" in western countries. So Zakir Husain very wisely silenced the opposition of traditionalists and adopted the middle path between literary education and manual work. For true education, he said, meant training both in mental work and manual work.

On 17th November 1946 Jamia Millia celebrated its Silver Jubilee when the country was in the grip of communal tension. But Zakir Husain succeeded in bringing together leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League to participate in the celebrations and here he made a moving speech and appealed to them to exercise their influence to restore communal unity: "The fire of hatred is fast spreading which makes it seem mad to tend to the garden of education. The fire is burning in a noble and humane land... For God's sake sit together and extinguish this fire of hatred. This is not time to ask who is responsible for it and what is its cause. The fire is raging. Please extinguish it." This speech moistened the eyes of many, including Jawaharlal Nehru.

After India became independent Zakir Husain was invited by Maulana Azad, the first Education Minister of Free India,

to take up the Vice-Chancellorship of Aligarh Muslim University which was facing closure since many of the teachers had migrated to Pakistan. Although he did not want to leave Jamia, under pressure from Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, he ultimately decided to leave it. In 1948 Zakir Husain returned to Aligarh which he had left in protest in 1920.

Aligarh Muslim University in those days was a hotbed of intrigues. It was a challenging task for Zakir Husain to set the affairs of the University right and to improve its stature. But he had come with a mission. His object was to improve the status of the University to enable it to play a significant role in the national life of free India. Because of his zeal for improving the teaching standards in the University, he recruited eminent teachers for different subjects, from wherever he could get them, without distinction of caste and creed. It is remarkable that by the time Dr. Zakir Husain left Aligarh University, it had come to be regarded as one of the best universities in the country. The academic standards had improved, the University had acquired a well-equipped library and laboratories all through the untiring efforts of Zakir Husain.

Because of Zakir Husain's important role in the reconstruction of national education, he was associated with various committees in the field of education in India. He served as a member of Education Commission, the University Grants Commission and several other bodies.

In 1952 when he was 55, he was nominated a member of the Rajya Sabha from the quota reserved for those who had distinguished themselves in literature, science, art and social service.

Zakir Husain served as Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh University for eight years. Then he resigned his post, wishing to lead a simple, quiet and retired life. But he had yet to serve the country in other ways.

On account of qualities of head and heart he was specially picked by Jawaharlal Nehru for the post of Governor of Bihar. He very reluctantly accepted the offer and was appointed in July 1957. Left to himself he would never have entered political life. He was a scholar who unwillingly accepted public responsibility. But he did not belong to the shoddy world of politics.

In 1962, Dr. Radhakrishnan was elected President of India and the vacancy of Vice-President had to be filled up. Zakir Husain was unanimously chosen for it.

The Vice-President is ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and Zakir Husain in this capacity won the respect and affection of all sections of the people.

In 1963, he was awarded 'Bharat Ratna', the highest award in the country, for his meritorious services to the nation.

In fact he had earned such a great reputation for himself that he was the obvious choice for the Presidentship when the Presidential election fell due in May 1967.

The Congress Party proposed the name of Zakir Husain. But the opposition parties set up their own candidate—K. Subba Rao—a former Chief Justice of India.

Zakir Husain was elected with a thumping majority. Even after his election Zakir Husain did not forget that he had been a teacher and, recalling the incident of October 1920, he said, "it was a great honour indeed that the nation bestowed on a mere teacher who some 42 years ago resolved to devote the best years of his life to national education." And in his speech of 13th May, 1967 on the assumption of office as President he said, "The whole of Bharat is my home—its people are my family. The people have chosen to make me the head of this family for a certain time. It shall be my earnest endeavour to seek to make this home strong and beautiful, a worthy home for a great people". And he devoted himself to the task of making India beautiful. He condemned violence, destruction and communal tension. He stressed the need for religious tolerance, communal harmony and constructive work. He was so much devoted to work that when due to ill-health he was asked by the doctors to take rest he told them that if he stopped working, he could not continue to occupy the Presidential chair.

On 3rd May 1969 when he was still busy with his work he got a heart attack and died all of a sudden leaving his family and the nation to mourn his death.

Some people grow in stature as they hold office, some remain what they were while others bring greatness to the office they hold. Dr. Zakir Husain belonged to the third category who did not draw his importance from the offices he held, but conferred on them his own distinction.

Zakir Husain embraced poverty, led a life of privation but he had no ill-will against the rich. Earlier when he was a teacher and later when he became the President he dressed himself in the same khaddar sherwani. He set an example in the art of living whether he lived in a small house or in Rashtrapati Bhavan. He treated the rich and the poor, the Hindu and Muslim, alike. He was a religious man—but he believed in the religion of service—the religion which elevates man, which teaches respect for man at his best. He was once delivering a speech on Guru Govind Singh. During the speech he found that tears were trickling down his eyes. He felt embarrassed but to his surprise he found his audience to be doing the same. That was possible because he was speaking from his heart. It reflected his utmost sincerity and faith in people professing other faiths.

Out of many qualities that Dr. Zakir Husain possessed the dominating one was his subtle sense of humour in everyday life. Humour that was pleasant, enjoyable, always elegant, never ironical; humour that was charged with warmth for his fellow-beings; humour which kept him young and spirited for years. This is borne out by several anecdotes from his life.

Once a young niece of one of Dr. Zakir Husain's friends met him in Rashtrapati Bhavan. He treated her so formally and courteously that she thought perhaps he had not recognized her. So she said, "I am afraid you have not recognized me." To this Dr. Zakir Husain replied, "I have recognized you but you have not recognized me."

Once a photographer had gone to take a special colour photograph of President Zakir Husain. The photographer gave him a book and requested him to hold it. Dr. Zakir Husain said, "I am an illiterate person. Why do you ask me to hold a book."

Jehan Begum, wife of Zakir Husain, was very fond of animals. She was especially devoted to a goat. When the goat died the Begum became very sad and upset. She refused her dinner. At that time Dr. Zakir Husain replied, "my wife and the goat always had a lively gossip session in the morning. One keeps on asking questions and the other is ready to answer."

Not only Jehan Begum but Zakir Husain himself was also fond of goat. Once a correspondent visited him and found him sitting on one cot while on another cot was a goat. Seeing

the visitor he remarked, "The other members of the family are away. The goat is keeping me company."

Once an old student of Zakir Husain brought a thrice-failed matriculate boy with him and requested him to exercise his influence to get him passed. Dr. Zakir Husain politely told him: "If you want me to do a wrong thing why not let it be a big one. I suggest that you might bring a form for admission to the graduation course that this boy could be admitted directly to the B.A. class." The man apologized and left immediately.

Dr. Zakir Husain was very fond of good food. Once late at night when he was coming from Okhla he felt like eating "tandoori chicken." He asked his driver to get one for the children. When the driver brought it he asked him to place it on the rear seat. When the car started the driver heard him munching. The driver asked him politely what he was doing. "Just tasting it to see if it is good for the children," was the reply.

During the communal riots once he was caught by the rioters and was rescued with great difficulty by a police inspector. Remembering the incident he said that his own life had ended that day, now he was living on borrowed life.

Once during the riots Jamia Millia was surrounded by arsonists. When Nehru came to know of this he rushed to the Jamia in a jeep. On his way he saw Zakir Husain coming in a tonga. Nehru asked him with much concern "Has there been much loss because of fire?" "Loss! on the contrary we have made a profit of at least two lakhs," Zakir Husain replied. "How was that?" asked Nehru surprisingly. "Because shops had books worth five lakhs. Books worth two lakhs have been saved from fire—that is our profit—because when I went there I was expecting a total loss," said Zakir Husain.

Once there was a theft in President's daughter's house in Jamia Millia. When his son-in-law informed him of the theft all that the President told him was: "Sometimes you should give out some money in charity as well."

There was a servant in Dr. Zakir Husain's house who used to get up very late in the morning. Everyone in his house was annoyed and requested him to throw him out. But he assured them that he would set him right. Next morning he went to the servant's room armed with a pail of water, a jug

and a towel and said, "Get up, Sir." When the servant sat up in bed, still half asleep, little realizing what was happening Zakir Sahib said, "Please have a wash, I am bringing some breakfast for you." From that day onward that servant was the first to rise in the house-hold.

When he was asked to grace the ceremonial chair for a special photograph he replied: "Are you using this ugly chair for photographing me? Don't make me look like a piece of furniture. Let it be as simple and as natural as possible. After all I am a human being."

It took them about ten minutes and at the end Dr. Husain remarked. "Only a cobra can keep its head erect for such a long time."

In early fifties Dr. Zakir Husain had gone to London and stayed in a house where one had to feed the electricity meter with a shilling quite often to get light. When the host left Dr. Husain was reading a book and there was light. But on her return she found him sitting in pitch dark. She asked him why he did not put another shilling to get more light. He replied: "More light cannot be bought with a shilling."

He had great regard for the sentiments of others. One Mr. Ali Mohammed was a teacher in Jamia Millia. He was puritan and considered it a sin to wear long pyjamas. So Zakir Husain used to pull up his own pyjamas while passing in front of his class. On being questioned why he did so he replied, "Mr. Ali Mohammed loves me and it would pain him to see me in long pyjamas. I pull them up to save him from that pain."

He had regard for the sentiments not only of individuals but also of committees. For the Diwali celebration he ordered the Rashtrapati Bhawan to be lit. "How can I remain aloof when my people are celebrating Diwali." He added to their happiness by sharing it with them.

Once while inaugurating a Ramlila in Delhi he applied *Tilak* to Rama. This was resented by the Muslims. To them he replied. "I am the Rashtrapati of India, not of a particular community."

Dr. Zakir Husain was fond of writing for children. He wrote many stories for children under unsuspected pseudonyms. Even when he died one of his book *Abu Khan Ki Bakri*, was under print. Another book *Kachhwa Aur Khargosh* was published

soon after his death. His other interesting stories for children include *Aqab Andha Ghora*, and *Usi Se Thanda Usi Se Garam*.

His association with writing for children lent respectability to literature for children. Many competent writers who previously thought it below their dignity to write for children, also have started writing now. He was also the patron of Children's Book Trust which brings out interesting, instructive, and educative books.

Poetry was his oldest passion. His favourite poet was Iqbal.

Zakir Husain's other hobbies were gardening, collecting paintings, fossils and stones. Gardening was his favourite pastime. Wherever he lived, whether in Jamia Millia or Aligarh University or, as later, in Vice-President's house or in Rashtrapati Bhawan—he always beautified the place by growing a variety of roses and other flowers. He started collecting fossils, rock and minerals from the time he became Governor of Bihar and at his death his collection exceeded 1,500 pieces.

About stones he once told one of his friends: "What can be a more precious thing than these stones. They neither have any enemy nor usurp anybody's rights. They neither conceal their real self nor reveal anyone else's secrets."

He was a great connoisseur of art and painting. He admired the paintings of Picasso, Husain, Gujral, Ram Kumar and Khanna. When he met Husain for the first time in 1951 at an exhibition he introduced himself without any fuss saying, "This humble one is also called Husain." He had a taste for music also. He loved playing the discs of Bach and Ravi Shankar.

He was a great conversationalist. He could argue and convince in a sweet and charming manner, without being emotional. He was truly a cultured man—a personification of everything good, pure, and pious.

Dr. Zakir Husain had an aversion for speech making. In 1962, when he was the Vice-President, he had accepted an invitation to inaugurate *Vanamahotsva* in the Buddha Jayanti Park on the condition that he would not have to make a speech. But at the function he was requested to say a few words. Naturally, he did not like the idea but he got up and delivered a one-sentence speech, "The use of the tree is that it gives shelter to all but does not speak."

At another occasion at a university gathering he said: "Listening is anyday a more civilized and more polite form of behaviour than speaking. Though speaking seems to have become part of destiny I console myself by the thought that in my life I have listened to much more talk than I have ventured or agreed to inflict."

In a speech at Patna he had a dig at speech-making "This business of speech-making is too much with us. We must make speeches, long speeches, short speeches, good speeches, bad speeches, significant speeches, futile speeches but speeches always and ever."

Maulana Hasrat Mohani

SHARIFUL HASAN

Much ink has been split on Hasrat Mohani's literary work but very little has been said about his political activities. Considering the paucity of literature regarding his political career it is very difficult to make out his political contribution. However, an attempt has been made in this paper to highlight this aspect of Hasrat Mohani so that it may be public that this literary genius trailed behind none of his contemporaries in the political field as well. He was in the forefront of our freedom movement. Hasrat Mohani, a man of promise, firm determination, dedication and devotion propagated his mission despite a number of hardships and difficulties.

A poet turned revolutionary is no more. What remains is the pale shadow of his past. Saiyed Fazlul Hasan, born in 1878 at Mohan, Unnao District, was known by his pen-name, Hasrat Mohani.

His early education was conducted in Urdu, Persian and Arabic. He completed his entrance with distinction securing the Government scholarship from G. L. College, Fatehpur. During his stay at Fatehpur, he came in close contact with Maulana Syed Zahoorul Islam, the founder of an Islamia School which later on grew as Muslim Inter College, Fatehpur U.P. and left an undelible impact upon his life. He became a disciple of Maulana Abdul Wahab Firangi Mahali, Lucknow. The impact of these two religious personalities upon his life was that despite his revolutionary thinking he was a pucca religious man.

At Aligarh

His father sent him to M.A.O. College, Aligarh, and he was admitted to B.A. He had developed literary taste in him while he was at Fatehpur and was very much popular among his friends. This made him popular very soon among his new friendly circle at Aligarh. He had brought a "Pandan" with him in Aligarh, which had earned him a new title "Khala Jan." He became a model of fine culture and tradition. Being a poet and a good speaker, he was selected as a secretary of the highly esteemed literary society, the Anjuman Urdu e-Mu'alla. Meanwhile his heart was burning with the feelings of patriotism and nationalism. In the nights he used to write something about Aurobindo Ghose and Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Hasrat was a man of transparent heart and noble qualities. He was also a man of extraordinary uncompromising nature.

First Muslim graduate

He was the first Muslim graduate of Aligarh who plunged into the national freedom movement as a leader of the revolutionary group and joined the Indian National Congress. As he believed in the philosophy of resorting to violent means for the country's freedom, he became staunch follower of Bal Gangadhar Tilak who parted with the Congress in 1907 when an open clash took place between the moderates and extremists at Surat.

During his childhood, brought up in an aristocratic manner, he was fully aware of the untold miseries, sufferings and grinding poverty of the Indian masses and traced its root cause to the British Raj. His national feelings and patriotism were sharpened during the days of his stay at Aligarh. The repressive policies of the British Government stirred his rebellious nature. He was expelled from the college in 1903 branding him as the "first youth rebel" of the college. The Union's grand Musha'ara was organised by him in which eminent poets from all over India were invited and the principal of the college, Theodore Morrison, had been informed that some rebellious poems against the British Raj had been recited which brought ill-effects upon the students community of the college as a whole.

Hasrat Mohani was immediately summoned and asked to furnish an explanation: a punjent dialogue followed: "Sir our poets stand for the noble ideals of humanity. In your society they may be condemned for lack of decency".

The noble cause which was dearest to him was the "freedom of his motherland from the slavery of the British Raj". Therefore, it can be said that he simply wanted to see his country free from the yoke of foreign rule.

Constant source of encouragement

His wife, Nishat Fatima, was a constant source of inspiration and encouragement to him throughout his life. She was the first Muslim lady who came out abandoning the purdah in order to actively participate in the national freedom struggle. Hasrat's entire work in Urdu reflected the logical flowering of the genius and through it, his rebellious spirit had its full play. His themes centred mostly around the life and sentiments of a forgotten section of society—those who remained neglected and suppressed throughout the ages in this country for which he had devoted his whole life.

He started editing the *Urdu-e-Mu'alla*, an Urdu literary magazine from Aligarh. The Newspapers Act 1908, the most oppressive and stringent in nature, was introduced to suppress the feeble but effective voice of the Indian people. He published an article advocating the cause of Swadeshi. According to some reliable sources the article was concerned with the Egyptian cause. However he was arrested and sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment. He was further fined to pay Rs. 500/- or undergo a further imprisonment of six months. As in those days there was no difference between the political prisoners and the ordinary prisoners the political prisoners were made to suffer more than ordinary criminals and thus life was miserable and unbearable and was full of physical tortures. Hasrat, worthy son of the worthy land of India cheerfully suffered all these tortures. His valuable collection of books consisting rare manuscripts was auctioned for a petty sum of Rs. 60—only for realising the amount of fine. Being a man of firm determination he had never accepted anything against his inner conscience. The uncompromising nature made him very often a laughing stock

among his friends. But despite various obstacles Hasrat Mohani kept on propagating his mission of life like any other crusader.

Simple life

He led a very simple life. Often he did not have anything to eat but never let it be known to others as he always used to stand by the side of the needy persons and was always ready to give whatever he had irrespective of his own requirements. Once Hasrat Mohani was going to participate in the Rudaun Sherif Urs, Barabanki, UP, a beggar begged him to give some clothings: thereupon he gave his 'achkan' to him and continued his journey wearing dirty kurta and pajama. Like Gandhi he always travelled in the third class with commoners.

Hasrat Mohani had severely criticised the presence of the British Government on the Indian soil. His writings and speeches had made the British to treat him as an enemy number one of the Raj. In rousing national sentiments and feelings of Muslims he did not leave any stone unturned. He was the first Muslim youth in northern India who had joined the Congress and exhorted his co-religionists to join the Indian National Congress. In support of his view he published two most significant and effective articles in his Urdu journal in which it had been forcefully advocated that Muslims should actively participate in the freedom struggle. Hasrat Mohani had also stimulated the Muslims that their participation and involvement was essential. He was of the view that the future of the Muslims was closely linked with the country's future. It may be pointed out here that the above mentioned two articles were contributed to the Urdu journal, by Maulana Abdul Qayum Hyderabad and Maulvi Barakatullah Bhopali who left India for good and had helped the freedom movement from European countries and had ultimately died in Switzerland.

Hasrat Mohani's main task was to prepare the Muslim masses by inculcating in them a sense of responsibility and participation in the freedom struggle. On the basis of common political interests and aspirations Hasrat Mohani had sought unification of the people and their complete independence. Hasrat Mohani, had, under the dynamic and energetic leader-

ship of Tilak, made the expulsion of the British Government by force of arms and the establishment of self-independent Government for India his life long motto. During the time of his emergence into the Indian political scene, he saw two groups operating in the Indian National Congress: the moderates, headed by the grand old man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale and Banerji and the extremists, under the courageous leadership of Balgangadhar Tilak, Bipinchandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai who were popularly known as Bal, Pal, Lal and were in favour of Swaraj and had adopted "passive resistance" as their effective tool of fighting against the potential machinery of the British Government and therefore Hasrat Mohani being immensely impressed by Tilak and accepted him as his political Guru and joined the extremist group.

Political reforms in 1909, according to extremists, could not be achieved through constitutional means. For the attainment of the purna Swaraj, Hasrat Mohani had exhorted his countrymen to imbibe national sentiments and advocated even the use of violent means.

An extremist

Hasrat was, being a true disciple of Tilak, an extremist and revolutionary in ideas, worked for removing social inequalities and cementing Hindū-Muslim unity. He therefore believed that revolutionary methods were the only methods through which the independence could be attained. After accepting Tilak as his leader, Hasrat Mohani invited the spirit of militancy and a desire for freedom from the yoke of foreign rule during his stay at Aligarh. For the fulfilment of his desire he like Tilak felt no hesitation in introducing religion into politics. Therefore he drew inspiration and found justification for using violent means in a righteous cause from the Holy Quran.

When he entered the political arena dominating political personalities of Dadabhai Naoroji, Balgangadhar Tilak, Gokhale, S. N. Banerji and Lala Lajpat Rai were the ideals of the youth of his time. Deeply impressed by these leaders, Hasrat Mohani adopted political activities as his future course of action which made his life immensely miserable. He was an ideal rebel leader.

However efforts had been made to divert his attention from active politics but he was not led away by his desires. Hasrat Mohani was offered the Professorship in Arabic by the Victoria College Gwalior, which he did not accept. A similar offer of judgeship was made by the British Government, which he refused to accept under the Raj. He wanted to serve the country, community and the language which he did throughout his life.

First at Aligarh Hasrat Mohani started his leather business in order to earn his livelihood but could not sustain it long because he was arrested and the property was confiscated. The era was highly dark in the history of our freedom movement. The British Government had let loose a reign of terror and harassment. People were fleeing from politics and were taking shelter behind the moderates. No one was ready to talk to the political leaders. People were not coming forward to join the Congress. The Congress was confined to few persons. But when the Khilafat movement was launched by Maulana Mohd. Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, Aligarh students were persuaded by Maulana Hasrat to join the Congress and thus the "sinking ship of the Congress Party" was rescued. At the instance of Hasrat Mohani, very many influential Muslim leaders joined the bandwagon of the Congress led by the Ali Brothers, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. M. A. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Writings

Through his writings he sought to rouse the patriotism of the people, particularly of the Muslims. He had preached the gospel of Indian unity and the need of concerted endeavour to mitigate India's untold sufferings.

For the achievement of his supreme mission, Hasrat Mohani adopted journalism as his profession and made Aligarh as the centre of his activities and started *Urdu-e-Mu'alla*, a monthly journal in July 1903. For his revolutionary ideas and anti-British views Hasrat Mohani had been rusticated thrice from the College. He might have missed his B.A. (Final) examination but for the intervention of Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the Secretary of the M.A.O. College Aligarh.

He was stoutly opposed to the loyalists policy of old Muslims and joined the Indian National Congress in 1904. As a delegate Hasrat Mohani had regularly attended the annual conferences of the Congress held in 1904 at Bombay, in 1905 at Banaras and in 1906 at Calcutta. He was the first Muslim youth in northern India to join the extremist movement of Tilak. Bengal's division in 1905 had created communal feelings in the country. The political repercussions of Bengal partition were felt all over the country. The Congress in its meeting held at Benaras in 1905 recorded a strong note of protest against the British Government. In 1906 split between moderates and extremists had been averted by Dadabhai Naoroji, Grand old Man of India who was invited to preside over the Calcutta session of the party. Smelling the growing discontent, the Congress in 1906 at Calcutta adopted the resolution on self-Government, Swadeshi, boycott and national education. At the next annual session of 1907 foundation of revolutionary feelings...was laid in several provinces of India...The extremists advocated the "passive resistance", whereas the moderates laid emphasis on "constitutional means" for achieving their goal. The moderates came determined to the 1907 Surat Session to drop resolution adopted in 1906 which was to be repeated again in 1907. On the other hand the extremists were determined for a showdown and even to contest the presidentship. The historic split in Congress took place on December 28, 1907 amidst tumultuous scenes.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani was dissatisfied with both the Congress and the League. He also joined some terrorist groups. His terrorist activities were not considered good by the college authorities and thus they declared the campus out of bounds for him.

Jail's tortures did not deter him from his chosen path and he restarted the publication of his Urdu journal for the propagation of his ideas, with renewed zeal and courage in October, 1909. Meanwhile his close friends had advised him to adopt a little soft attitude towards the British Raj. But for a crusader and ultra radical like Hasrat Mohani, it was very difficult to deviate from his way of life. While expressing his great sense of gratitude, Hasrat Mohani made his point of view clear and quoted Mustafa Kamal Pasha. "There is no alternative left to the vanquished communities and nations except that

they should engage themselves with concerted effort in the pursuit of their lost freedom". Then he observed "One whose policy does not subscribe to this basic aim, is certainly excluded from the group of the nationalists".

On May 19, 1913 Hasrat Mohani was asked to deposit Rs. 3000/- as security for his press and *Urdu-e-Mu'alla* under the Press Act. When he failed to deposit the required money his press including journal was seized by the British Government whereas the entire value of the press owned by him was not more than Rs. 50/-. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had also paid rich tributes and severely criticised the repressive policies of the British Raj in his two articles published in *Al Hilal*, May 21 and 28, 1913.

On December 30, 1906 under the Presidentship of Nawab Viquar-ul-Mulk, All India Muslim League was founded in Dacca. Due to his independent political ideology Hasrat Mohani was disgusted with the League but was not pessimistic about it. He was convinced in his view that in the near future some dynamic changes would take place in the thinking of the Muslim league and therefore he had written an article under the title "Musalmanan-e-Hind-Ka Political Musitaqbill" (political future of Indian Muslims). When the League at its session held in Lucknow in March 1913 adopted self-government and unity of the country as its aim Hasrat Mohani began to attend its meetings. The Muslim League was at the verge of its division into loyalists and nationalists of Ahrar. Hasrat Mohani was one of the big Ahrars and in the presence of the big stalwarts like Maulana Mohd. Ali and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, he had earned the title "Syed-ul-Ahrar".

Khilafat

The war of Tripoli in 1911-12 and the Balkan war in 1912-13 had infused a new political awakening among Indian Muslims. Hasrat Mohani on his own had collected funds and sent money-orders to the President of the Anjuman Hilal-Ahmar in the months of May-June 1913. During the same period Anjuman Khudam-e-Kar "had been founded by Maulana Abdul Bari Firangi Mahili, in which Hasrat Mohani had played prominent role and published its constitution in *Urdu-e-Mu'alla*. Due

to the demolition of a mosque in Kanpur in 1913, the leadership of the League was captured by the Muslim youth and consequently Maulana Abdul Bari, Maulana Azad Subhani, Maulana Mohd Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Hasrat had emerged as the top ranking leaders of the Muslim League.

At Agra in December 1913 in the League session under the chairmanship of the Agha Khan a resolution of thanks to the Viceroy had been moved which was not only supported by the loyalists but also by the large number of Ahrars. But the freedom champion Hasrat Mohani did not support it. At the Bombay session of the League held in 1915 under the presidency of Maulana Mazharul-Haq, Hasrat Mohani along with Jinnah and Mazharul Haq made concerted efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity to which both the Congress and League agreed.

While the Rowlatt Bill was still under discussion in the legislative Council, Gandhi made up his mind to resort to Satyagraha. He toured different parts of the country to equip the people on the path of Satyagraha. A local Satyagraha committee was also formed in Delhi on March 7, 1919 with a membership of 15 persons, more important of them being Dr Ansari, Mahatma Munshi Ram alias Swami Shradhanand, Hasrat Mohani, Dr. Abdur Rahman, Shankar Lal, Shiv Narain Haskar, Miss Gmliner, Mohd Shoeb, who took the Satyagraha vow.

In November 1919 a combined meeting of Hindus and Muslims was called in Delhi for the consideration of the Khilafat Movement which Hasrat attended. A resolution asking for the boycott of foreign goods was adopted. But Hasrat Mohani laid much emphasis upon that only British made goods should be boycotted which was opposed by Gandhi describing it as impracticable. On the insistence of Hasrat Mohani the non-cooperation resolution was adopted. However, in December 1920 both Congress and Muslim League adopted the Non-cooperation resolution at Nagpur in which he also actively participated along with his wife.

At the Ahmedabad Congress session held in December 1921 Hasrat Mohani moved his resolution of complete independence in the subject committee and served a notice that he would move

it in the open session. The resolution was defeated on account of Gandhiji's stiff opposition.

Swadeshi movement

Hasrat Mohani attended the All India Industrial Conference held in 1905 at Banaras and started the propagation of Swadeshi. According to him Swadeshi was the only method for the economic growth in India. He believed both in theory as well as in practice. For example, Hasrat Mohani visited Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi in winter season who provided him with an English woollen blanket in the night. He had spent the whole bitterly cold night without using that blanket. He had the capacity to do his work. For the propagation of Swadeshi, Hasrat Mohani wrote various articles in his *Urdu-e-Mu'alla*, toured the country, persuaded the people to use the Indian made goods and had the religious decree for it. Because of his untiring efforts the Swadeshi became very popular among Muslims. When *Urdu-e-Mu'alla* was closed down, Hasrat Mohani established a "Mohani Swadeshi Store" in Rasal Ganj at Aligarh in 1913. He was wholly financed by Maulana Shibli and Viqar Ul-Mulk and Sir Fazilbhai Karimbhai.

Being an eminent poet and extremist politician he actively participated in all constructive activities of the country. For example in 1910 under the chairmanship of the Agha Khan, the Muslim University Foundation Committee was constituted. When the requisite fund was collected a dispute arose among the Muslims on the conditions being imposed by the Government in return for the Muslim University Act.

Hasrat was always shadowed by the CID and was served with detention order issued under the Defence of India Act after attending the M. U. Foundation Committee meeting held in May 1916 at Lucknow. First he refused to obey the detention order and started correspondence with the State Government but the local authorities without waiting the State Government sent him to Lalitpur jail against his will. He was charged with the defiance of the authority and was sentenced for two years rigorous imprisonment and his appeal was also rejected by the district sessions judge and was refused to go in appeal to

the High Court. After two years imprisonment he was released on May 22, 1918 but was kept under house arrest for few months in Meerut and Mohan. Ultimately all restrictions were removed in December 1918.

In 1921 the Non-cooperation Movement was at its height. The Congress was dominated by Gandhi.

In 1921 Hasrat Mohani also attended the meeting of the Khilafat committee where he moved his complete independence motion in its Subject Committee which was passed but he was not allowed to move it in the open session by Hakim Ajmal Khan who had presided over the deliberation. Hasrat Mohani was himself the President of the League's session in which his resolution of Swaraj was defeated. The address delivered by him was described by the Government as seditious one. He was arrested on the charge of revolt.

The district and sessions judge found him guilty for committing offences punishable u/s 124 A.I.P.C. in respect of three speeches and sentenced him to suffer rigorous imprisonment for two years. Thereupon Hasrat Mohani went in appeal to the High Court of Judicature at Bombay. The High Court did not find him guilty of waging war against the king and therefore acquitted him.

The first All India Conference of Communists was held in Kanpur on December 26, 1925. Hasrat was the President of the reception committee. He suggested that the new party be named the Indian Communist Party but was rejected. He suggested that communism in our country should have Indianness. He used to call himself as a "Muslim communist."

He further said "complete independence is my goal" and I am Communist. First I was a nationalist but in 1925 I said good-bye to nationalism and the Communism is coined as a way of life." For the propagation of socialism and communism Hasrat had contributed more than ten articles in various papers. With the dawn of communism in India, political consciousness was increasingly going among the industrial workers. Hasrat Mohani led a delegation of the Kanpur mill and entered the Congress pandal in order to explain the workers' grievances to the Congress leaders. He was a fullfledged member of the Kanpur Sooti Mill Mazdoor Union.

Though the Congress had passed the motion for the complete Independence in 1927, the Nehru Report recommended

Dominion Status for India in 1928. In his press conference on August 20, 1928 Hasrat criticised this recommendation of the Nehru Report. An All Parties conference was held on 28-30 August 1928 in Kaiser Bagh, Lucknow for the consideration of the Nehru Report. Hasrat Mohani along with his followers opposed it but the report was passed with a majority.

In 1928 Hasrat Mohani started a new paper namely *Must-aqil* which continued as a daily newspaper till 1929. Again he revived the publication of *Urdu Mua'lla* in 1925 which continued till March 1942.

Hasrat Mohani took active part in the social and political activities of Kanpur. In 1928 and 1929 he founded "Young Muslims Association" of which the first President was Syed Zakir Ali, advocate.

In 1931 a serious communal riot had occurred in Kanpur in which Hasrat Mohani, alongwith Chaudhri Khaliqizzaman, Hafiz Hidayat Husain, Dr. Jawahar Lal Rohtagi, Pandit Daya Shankar Nigam worked for Hindu-Muslim unity and restoration of law and order in the city.

Hasrat was one of the founders of Jamatu Ulma-e-Hind which was founded in 1919 alongwith the Khilafat Committee. The split took place in it in 1930 when one faction held its meeting in Amroha under the presidentship of Shah Moinuddin Ajmeri and another had its meeting at Kanpur under Maulana Mohd. Ali. Later on these groups were known as Jamatul-Ulma-e-Delhi and Jamatul Ulma-E-Kanpur.

After the "Communal Award" and after the passing of the Government of India Act 1935 Hasrat along with Sheikh Mushir Husain Qidwai, Maulana Azad Subhani, Syed Zakir Ali and Syed Hasan Riaz founded the "Azad Party" and its main aim was the "complete independence and the Hindu-Muslim unity" but it did not last long.

In October 1937 the Muslim League became a mass organisation under the leadership of Jinnah and Hasrat Mohani became a member of its UP Parliamentary Board. It was Hasrat Mohani who made the League popular among the Muslim masses in U.P.

At the Lucknow session of the Muslim League he took very prominent part and moved in the same session and the League had adopted the resolution for "complete independence" and

establishment of a Federal Government in which the provinces were to be autonomous and the rights of minorities and other weaker sections were to be safeguarded. The Muslim League recommended his name for the membership of the UP Legislative Assembly.

Jinnah was in favour of having an "independent Pakistan" whereas Hasrat Mohani stood for the complete autonomy of Muslim dominated provinces within a united India.

Hasrat had discussed this constitutional plan with the leaders of Congress and the Muslim League. He went to Wardha and discussed his plan with Gandhiji, Rajgopalachari and Sardar Patel. Had his plan of constitutional set-up been accepted, partition of the country would have been averted.

He opposed Jinnah on the issue of the Cripps Mission Plan. He was afraid that he might accept the Dominion Status for India.

He was among the founders of Progressive Writers Association in 1935 along with Sajid Zahir and Mulk Raj Anand. The first meeting of the association was held under the presidentship of Munshi Prem Chand in 1936 at Lucknow. Hasrat Mohani played a prominent role.

He was not only interested in national affairs but was also interested in international affairs. In 1938 the Palestinian Conference was held at Cairo. A joint delegation of the League and Khilafat Committee attended it on the invitation of Mahmood Aluha Pasha.

He was elected to the UP Legislative Assembly in 1946 and then to the Constituent Assembly. On the advice of Jinnah, Muslim League decided to boycott but Hasrat Mohani opposed it. Despite this difference of opinion both respected each other.

Soon after the declaration of the partition plan of June 3, 1947 Hasrat Mohani resigned from the Muslim League as he did not want to have the independence at the cost of the country's unity and integrity. He was totally fed up with the Congress and the Muslim League. After Tilak he considered Subhas Chandra Bose as the only wise leader. He was convinced that Bose is alive and would appear and change the entire Indian political set up. After the establishment of Pakistan, Hasrat Mohani preferred to remain in India.

He was not happy with the political development of India. He was a great source of inspiration for Muslims of India. He had never forgotten his responsibilities towards Indian Muslims. In the most unfavourable political odds no change had come in his revolutionary fervor.

Constituent Assembly

Both in the Constituent Assembly and Provisional Parliament he had demonstrated his straightforwardness. He never stopped from expressing his views what he thought proper and right. In the Indian Parliament he was the only member who very boldly and courageously pleaded the Muslim minority's cause and voiced their grievances fearlessly.

When the constitution had been adopted all the members were, being the Founding Fathers, asked to put their signatures in the constitution but Hasrat Mohani had refused to sign on the ground that the Constitution had been drafted against his wish. He wanted to establish a confederation for India in which the states should have full autonomy.

On August 15, 1949 on the eve of the Independence Day celebration Rajaji, the last Governor-General of India, hosted a dinner in which Maulana Hasrat Mohani among others was invited.

Maulana Abdul Bari Farangi Mahli

MUFTI MOHAMMAD RAZA ANSARI

Maulana Qayam-ud-Din Mohammed Abdul Bari was born in 1878 in a famous family of Ulema of Farangi Mahal. He was taught and educated at home in the traditional style. He got education perfectly well at home under the guidance of famous teachers of Farangi Mahal. After completion of his studies he became a teacher and writer.

He first entered politics in 1912 when the Balkan war was going on. He was 30 years-old then. He got publicity in the political field after the incident of desecration of a mosque in Kanpur. While Sir Imam Ali, Maharaja Sir Mohammad Ali Mohammad Khan of Mahmoodabad, Mr. Mazharul Haq and Sir Syed Raza Ali were pleading in the case as lawyers and political leaders, Maulana Bari took part as a religious luminary.

During the Balkan War Maulana Bari used to consult leading Muslim Ulema on the question of saving the shrines in Arabia from destruction. They were of the opinion that the safety of Harmain Sharif (Mecca and Medina) was more urgent and the world Muslims should lend support to the Arab Governments in looking after these shrines.

There was a big gathering of Muslim leaders in Lucknow in December 1913 to discuss the issue. The Muslim University Foundation Committee, All India Muslim League Council and Hilal Ahman used to organise meetings, in this connection. Maulana Mohammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali were also present in Lucknow those days.

Anjuman

Maulana Bari invited the Ali Brothers and Sheikh Mushir Hussain Kidwai at Farangi Mahal and after a prolonged discussion formed an organisation—Anjuman-e-Khuddam Kaaba—with Maulana Bari as its President and Sheikh Mushir Hussain and Maulana Shaukat Ali as secretaries. Delhi was chosen as headquarters.

Although the apparent objective of the organisation was to guide the Muslim pilgrims to Mecca and other shrines in Arabia, the real aim was to strengthen Muslim politics and create hatred against the British Government so that the Muslims could know the British attitude towards their religious places. The British Government got scent of it and began to suspect the activities of the organisation. When Ali Brothers were imprisoned during World War I and Sheikh Mushir Hussain left for Europe in 1916, the Anjuman was automatically dissolved.

Maulana Bari frequently visited the Ali Brothers in Chhirdwara jail in MP and used to discuss different problems. There was unrest among some sections of Muslims due to their arrest. And Maulana Bari was in the forefront in the protest.

Meanwhile, Gandhi had returned from England in 1915. Sheikh Mushir Hussain wrote to Maulana Bari from England about the discussion he had had with the young Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi who was sympathetic to the cause of Caliphate. Gandhiji favoured Muslims' sentiments. Maulana met him in Delhi in 1918 and discussed the problems arising out of Balkan War, Caliphate and the arrest of Ali Brothers.

Gandhi led the delegation of Muslims which met the Viceroy and demanded the release of the Ali Brothers.

When World War I began, Maulana Bari on behalf of the Anjuman, requested in a telegram to the Turkish Caliph (Sultan of Turkey) to remain neutral in the war. On the other hand he got the promise from the English Government, on behalf of Muslims, that the Muslim shrines would not be touched, desecrated or destroyed during the war but protected.

But the British Government backed out of the promise when the war ended. This created uneasiness among the Muslims in India. In September 1919, a big meeting of Muslims took place in Lucknow in which leaders participated. After discus-

sing the Caliphate problem, an all India committee known as the Khilafat Committee was formed with Seth Chhotani of Bombay as President and Mr. Ahmed Siddique Khattri of Bombay as General Secretary. Maulana Bari was again the brain behind the formation of the committee and a big rallying force to convene such a big gathering. When the Ali Brothers were released in December 1919, Maulana Shaukat Ali was made secretary of the Central Khilafat Committee.

Then Maulana Bari intensified his efforts in order to acquaint Muslims of the true problem and began to muster wide support. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, who was president of the reception committee of All India Muslim League Conference in Delhi in 1918, asked the Maulana to seek the solution to the problem from the League platform instead of forming a separate organisation of Muslims. Maulana Bari agreed to this and the first big conference under his leadership was convened under the banner of the Muslim League in which leading Ulema participated.

Jamiat

Then, in 1919, on the occasion of the first Khilafat conference in Delhi, presided over by Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq of Bengal, Maulana Bari suggested the formation of Jamiat-ul-Ulema Hind. The organisation was soon formed and Maulana Bari presided over the first meeting attended by, among others, Hakim Ajmal Khan.

Maulana Bari and the Jamiat fully supported the stand taken under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to protest against the atrocities in Punjab. Maulana Bari was second to none in preaching the creed of nonviolence of Gandhiji among Muslims.

Besides Maulana Hasrat Mohani, disciple of Maulana Bari's father, Maulana Abdul Wahab, also fully subscribed to the movement although he did not accept the non-violence creed of Gandhi.

When the All India National Congress with the cooperation and support of Muslims accepted the creed of Gandhi, the latter became the leader of both the movements—the Congress and the Caliphate. Maulana Bari remained with Gandhi and deve-

loped good relations with almost all the leaders—Muslim as well as Hindu.

The Ali Brothers were not known as 'Maulana' till their release. It was Maulana Bari who, in view of their services to Islam and Muslims, got the honorary degree of 'Maulana' conferred on him from Madrasa 'Nizamia—his Madrasa of Farangi Mahal—in 1921.

When a Muslim delegation was formed in 1920 to go to London to discuss the Caliphate movement with the British Government, Maulana Bari was named as a member. But he asked Maulana Syed Suleman Nadvi to represent him. The delegation was led by Maulana Mohmad Ali.

A group of Maulana Bari's disciples in Farangi Mahal also participated in the Non-Cooperation movement. One of his relations Maulana Mohammad Salamat Ullah Farangi Mahli was sent to jail in 1922. In jail, he was with Motilal Nehru, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Mohan Lal Saxena and Chaudhury Khaliqur Zaman.

Maulana Mohammad Shafi Hujjat Ullah, son of Maulana Salamat Ullah, who was a leader in the Madrasa of Maulana Azad in Calcutta's Nakhuda Ki Masjid, was also arrested. This Madrasa was established during the Non-Cooperation Movement in order to counter the Government-backed Madrasa Alia. For quite some time Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani was also a teacher at this Madrasa.

Another relation of Maulana Bari, Maulana Barkat Ullah Raza Farangi Mahli, was imprisoned in Bahraich in 1919 for "anti-national" activities. When Sultan Ibn Saud took over the Haiman Sharifain (Mecca and Medina) in 1924, Maulana Bari was first in India to protest and lead the movement against this unjust act of Ibn Saud. He formed a body—Khuddam-ul Haramain.

His wholehearted participation in the movement against Ibn Saud somewhat caused the break in his relations with the Ali Brothers because they were in favour of the action taken by Ibn Saud.

On the one hand, Muslims of India, during this period, were busy in protesting against this Saudi and Sharifi move and, on the other they were resisting the reactionary move of Shudhi and Sanghatan in India itself. They were already busy in the

protest against the moves that Maulana Bari died in January 1926 after a brief illness at the age of 47.

The best tribute paid to him was that by Mahatma Gandhi himself, who in 1942, when the Quit India Movement was at its peak, retorted to Mr. Jinnah's allegations of Gandhiji's being Muslims' enemy No. 1. Gandhiji was addressing the AICC session when he said:

“Whether I am an enemy of Muslims or their friend, Maulana Abdul Bari would have answered had he been alive. He was a great man. I used to stay with him in Lucknow.

Maulana Shibli Nomani was born in 1857 in village vicinal to Azamgarh. His father was a prosperous landlord and indigo merchant and saw to it that his child lived in considerable comfort. By lineage Shibli was a Rajput and fully shared the traits—sharpness, self-respect and ambition—which are supposed to be characteristics of the Rajput community. His sensitivity and touchiness made him ever restive and for that reason he could settle down neither at Aligarh nor at Nadva nor at Hyderabad.

Shibli was educated in the traditional style and achieved distinction in different fields such as Persian, Arabic, Logic, Theology and Traditions. He was lucky to have the guidance of eminent teachers, namely, Mohammad Faruque-Chiryakoti, Irshad Husain, Ahmad Ali Saharanpuri and Faizul Hasan. Of these, Mohammad Faruque was his greatest mentor. He was a great scholar and it was his influence which in the first stage made Shibli a great champion of orthodoxy and a staunch follower of the Hanafi creed; he devoted most of his early effort and time, intelligence and scholarship in opposing the non-conformists. But when he started working in the Aligarh College and came in contact with Sir Syed, the direction of his efforts changed. Religion and community became his theme and his literary style, both in prose and poetry, assumed the qualities of scholarship and sobriety. He became one of the closest associates of Sir Syed in the task of building up Aligarh.

In a sense, he was the most distinguished amongst the learned men around Sir Syed, for whereas his other colleagues were masters in their respective fields of specialization, Shibli's brilli-

ant writings covered a vast canvass which included literature, criticism, biography, history, religion and philosophy. His important works include *Sherul Ajam*, *Mawazna-i-Anees-o-Dabir*, *Al-Faruque*, *Al-Mamoon*, *Al-Ghazali*, *Al-Kalam*, *Ilmul-Kalam*, *Seerat-un-Nabi*, *Al-Noman*, *Maqalat-i-Shibli* and *Life of Maulana Rum*. These are very important contributions to Urdu—contributions which helped it in becoming a living and modern language. His individual style which is effective, forceful, perfect and neat—and his diction—which is fluent and flawless—are treasures which the Urdu language would ever cherish.

After Shibli joined Aligarh, he became a great admirer of Sir Syed and his sentiments in this regard are well reflected in his poem *Subh-i-Ummid* written in 1887. But religious and personal differences developed and continued to grow and Shibli's sensitive nature only helped to accentuate them. An incident in this connection is related: on the occasion of a function Shibli could not restrain his tears when he was allotted a back-seat because the seating arrangement was on the basis of salary received by the participating guests.

As a critic

Shibli took a stand against Sir Syed not only because he did not see eye to eye with him in respect of certain religious beliefs but also because he felt that the latter was excessively inclined towards westernism and modernism. He was not opposed to English education but he firmly believed that the neglect of religious studies would only harm the Muslim community.

The establishment of *Nadvat-ul-Ulema* in 1894 as the seat of traditional learning very much pleased Shibli. He made the institution his life's mission, attended all its annual meetings and finally became its member in 1905. He had hoped and planned for necessary reforms in the traditional system of education at Nadva but when he proposed some basic changes in the Syllabi, he had to encounter a stout opposition from the orthodox ulemas. As a result he had to leave the institution in 1914. But he was not to sit back and he took an eventual step—that was the foundation of *Dar-ul-Musannifeen* at Azamgarh. The way in which this institution served the community, the country and the nation in the field of education, literature, history and reli-

gion is a story by itself. The founder of the institution breathed his last in November 1914 in his own institution and was buried there.

Shibli will always be remembered for firing religious fervour and fanning the flame of national independence. His writings in *Al-Hilal*, *Hilal Zamindar* and *Muslim Gazette* educated and enthused his generation in no small measure. He was one step ahead of Sir Syed in preparing the Muslim mind for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and national freedom. His forceful poems, especially the one written in 1913 relating to the Kanpur Mosque, are live-wires even today. Shibli was a scholar who interpreted the past and re-evaluated the cultural heritage. He gave his people a self-confidence and taught them not to be over-awed by the modern western civilization. He was also an enemy of the hide-bound orthodoxy and had no patience with it. He was not only a great reformist in his own way, but had revolutionary thinking in national matters such as unity and independence from foreign domination. His pen was his sword which he wielded so effectively that very few of his contemporaries could match him. Shibli was so many things at the same time. Verily, he was not just a person but an institution.

M.R. SHERVANI

T. A. K. Shervani was born at a village by the name of Bilona in the district of Aligarh in the year 1885. His father Haji Abdul Rashid Khan was a middle-class zamindar. T. A. K. Shervani had two brothers—Nisar Ahmad Khan Shervani—born in 1889, and Fida Ahmad Khan Shervani—born in 1900. He had a sister Alia Khanum—born in 1892. His mother Masud Begum was the daughter of a neighbouring landlord.

Shervanis originally came from Afghanistan belonging to a village by the name of the Shervan at the border of Persia. They came to India in the twelfth century. During the reign of the Lodis, they rose to great heights. One of the most important ministers of Sikander Lodi was Uman Khan Shervani. It is recorded in history that after Bahlol Lodi, the Queen wanted Jalal Lodi to ascend the throne but it was Umar Khan Shervani who felt that it was in the interest of the state for Sikander Lodi to succeed and he succeeded in placing Sikander Lodi on the throne. His son, Mohammad Khan Shervani, was Governor of KOYL which, in those days, comprised Agra Division. During the reign of Ibrahim Lodi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army was a Shervani. During the reign of Akbar, Peer Mohammad Khan Shervani was appointed Governor of Jaunpur. (Ref: *Tareekh Farishta*, *Waqayaat-Babari* and *Akbar Nama*).

The activities of Sher Shah Suri and revolt of Suleman Khan and Daood Khan of Bengal changed the policies of the Moghul Kings towards the pathans and therefore, the Shervanis migrated from there to Punjab, Hyderabad, Aligarh and Madras. The ancestors of T. A. K. Shervani settled down at

Aligarh and Etah. During the nineteenth century, however, most of the Shervanis accepted the British authority and gave them all kinds of help and in return got big land concessions, but the branch of T. A. K. Shervani, his grandfather, Asad Ali Khan Shervani, did not accept the British authority and remained a fugitive in the district of Etah and Aligarh. His father, Abdul Rashid Khan settled at Bilona village where he purchased Zamindari.

He got married in 1900 at a tender age of 15 to Asrar Fatima, the daughter of Ahmad Sayeed Khan, a neighbouring landlord. His wife had been brought up in very conservative atmosphere and could only read Quran in Arabic and write Urdu. T. A. K. Shervani had no children for 22 years of their married life but in the twenty-third year in 1923 a daughter was born called Khalda Khanam. T. A. K. Shervani could not pay any attention to the education of his daughter due to his political activities. The girl, therefore, remained at home and studied only the Quran and Urdu like her mother. In 1938, three years after the death of the late T. A. K. Shervani, she was married to a neighbouring landlord Habibul Hasan Khan Shervani. They are now living at village Dholna in the district of Etah.

T. A. K. Shervani had his early traditional education at home through a Molvi. In the year 1897 a Junior High School was started at Chharrah by the name of Shervani School. T. A. K. Shervani joined this school and then came to Aligarh Anglo-Mohammaden College and graduated from there. At Anglo-Mohammaden College he was Secretary of the Students' Union and a member of the first Eleven of the football team. He earned a name for himself as an excellent goal-keeper. During this time he led several delegations for collection of funds for the Aligarh College and was always considered a leader amongst men. Dr. Syed Mahmood, Obaidul Rahman Sindhi and Mr. Abdul Majeed Khwaja were his contemporaries during that period. Towards the end of 1908 or the beginning of 1909, he went to the United Kingdom for study of Law and joined Lincoln Inn. Jawaharlal Nehru was his contemporary studying Law in the same institution together with Dr. Syed Mahmood and Abdul Majid Khwaja. All four of them became barristers at the same time and returned to India together in 1912.

On his return from the United Kingdom, T. A. K. Shervani settled down at Aligarh and started practice in the district in courts and in a very short time he built up a lucrative practice. His contact with Jawaharlal Nehru was maintained and he attended the first session of the Indian National Congress in 1914 and became a regular member of the Indian National Congress from 1916. During 1916-1920 he came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das and was greatly influenced by them. He was arrested for the first time in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1921. His arrest had profound effect on his two younger brothers—Nisar Ahmed Shervani, who was Superintendent, Posts & Telegraphs, in the Government service, and Fida Ahmed Shervani, who was studying in Intermediate at Aligarh. At about the same time, Mahatma Gandhi came to Aligarh and gave a call for resignation from Government service and boycott the educational institutions. Nisar Ahmed Shervani resigned his post and Fida Ahmad Shervani gave up his education. Both the younger brothers were also arrested and sentenced to imprisonment—the longest term having been awarded to Nisar Ahmad Shervani, as he was the first Civil Service officer to have revolted and the Government wanted to make an example of him. Jawaharlal Nehru influenced T. A. K. Shervani to shift to Allahabad in 1924, and practice in the High Court. After he shifted to Allahabad in 1924, he became actively involved in the political struggle and held various posts in the provincial Congress Committee. In 1929-30, he became the President of the UPCC and remained President for several years. He was also a member of the Indian National Congress. During this period, his colleagues and friends were Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Shri Prakash Mohanlal Saxena, and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.

Shervani believed in fighting the battle of independence from outside as well as from within the legislatures. He contested for the Central Legislative Assembly right up to his death in 1935. About a year before his death, he was put up as a Congress Party nominee for the Presidentship of the Central Legislative Assembly. The official party consisting of the Europeans and other nominated members put up Sir Abdul Rahim as their candidate. The election being the first in which the Congress was taking part, aroused keen interest everywhere and as time

proceeded, became extremely tough. As the Congress nominee brightened, the Viceroy became worried as it would have been a great slur on the Government of India if a Congress candidate had won this most respected elected office in the country. There was so much of keenness that even sick members were brought on stretchers to cast their votes. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the Muslim League leader at that time, controlled 5 votes. He had given his word to vote for T. A. K. Shervani but on the midnight of the election day under pressure from the Viceroy, he changed sides and voted for the official Government candidate. T. A. K. Shervani lost that memorable election by 3 votes.

Till his death on March 22, 1935, T. A. K. Shervani had been sentenced to different terms of imprisonment five times in the 14 years of his active struggle for freedom. His youngest brother Fida Ahmad Shervani also died at the tender age of 39. Neither of them could see India free. Nisar Ahmad Shervani, the middle brother, however, lived upto 1956. He was a Cabinet Minister in U.P. in the first Congress Government during 1946-1951.

T. A. K. Shervani was by no means of firebrand. Institutionally, he was right of the centre. In spite of this he understood Jawaharlal Nehru and his socialistic inclinations. He was against caste system, untouchability and keen to bring about social reforms.

He championed the cause of widow marriages. He supported the Hindu Child Marriages Bill in the Central Assembly which was intended to prevent child marriages. He openly condemned the Muslims of the Assembly who were opposed to applicability of this bill to Muslims. He condemned communal fanatics. He felt humiliated when some Muslims sought protection of the Holy prophet through legislation. He claimed that India was "Nur-ul Islam" and not "Dar-ul-Harab" as orthodox Muslims sought to make out. According to him communalism was bigger enemy of the country than foreign bureaucracy. Speaking in the political conference at Mirzapur in 1931 he said, "I assure you with all the emphasis at my command that we cannot win real freedom so long as there is even a tinge of communalism in the country. Communalism starts as an antidote but itself becomes a menace for communalism as one community tends to awaken communalism in all the

surrounding communities and soon becomes an epidemic of the worst type." "Communalism", he said, "was not only wicked but stupid". In his opinion bigotry in religion was a degradation of a lofty ideal.

It was his view that either a community must dominate the other or live at peace with them. "The former in the long run of history is impossible." he said "and therefore, the latter was the only alternative". In his opinion communalism helped the self-seeker the unscrupulous and the degenerate.

Addressing his Hindu audience, he said, "Communalism in a minority community is based on suspicion. But communalism in a majority community is the outcome of hatred. The hatred may or may not have been excited by justifiable suspicion. But hatred is hatred whatever may be the cause."

Addressing Muslims he said, "The separatist policy pursued by you has got a great deal to do with the spirit of communalism. Distrust can never beget trust. Safeguards are not the cure and even if they are a cure the best safeguard is the goodwill of the sister community, which can only be secured by making a common cause with them.

T. A. K. Shervani was opposed to separate electorate for Muslims. "The advocates of separate electorate," he said, "wanted to widen the unsurmountable barriers between Muslims and Hindus." T. A. K. Shervani was intensely patriotic. Before 1931 he believed in non-violence only as a matter of policy but during 1930-1931 Satyagraha and the no-rent campaign in U.P. he was convinced that not only the best but the surest way to get India free was through non-violence. He believed that the real guarantee for the future did not lie in combinations, pacts and treaties but in moral disarmament.

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